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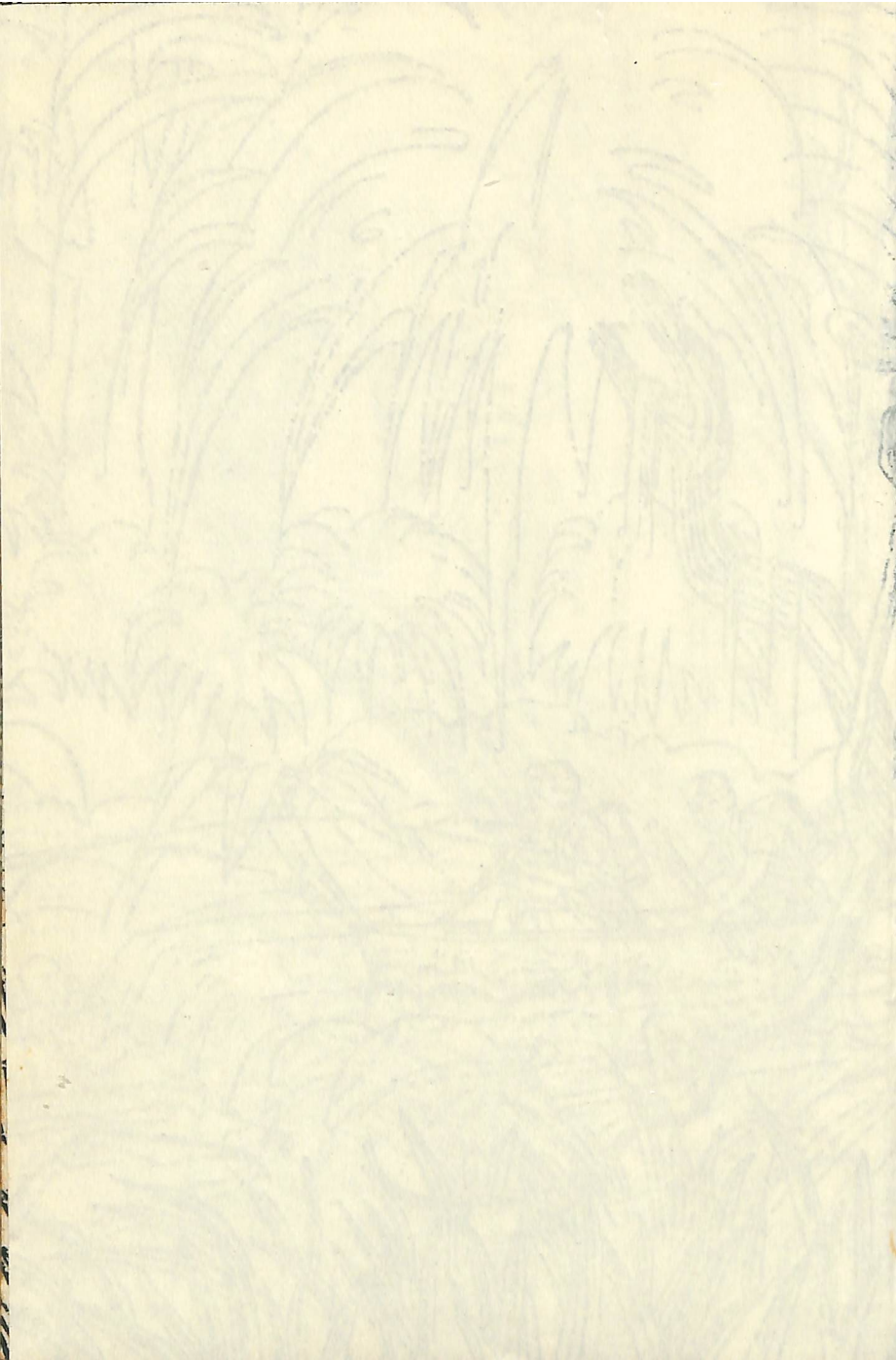


A BIFF BREWSTER

MYSTERY ADVENTURE







AFRICAN IVORY MYSTERY

BIFF BREWSTER MYSTERY ADVENTURES

BRAZILIAN GOLD MINE MYSTERY

MYSTERY OF THE CHINESE RING

HAWAIIAN SEA HUNT MYSTERY

MYSTERY OF THE MEXICAN TREASURE

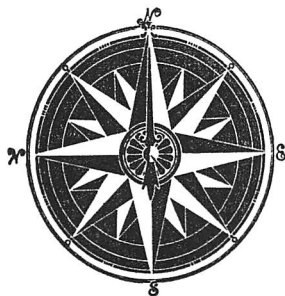
AFRICAN IVORY MYSTERY

ALASKA GHOST GLACIER MYSTERY



"Here come some of them," whispered Biff

A BIFF BREWSTER



MYSTERY ADVENTURE

AFRICAN IVORY MYSTERY

By ANDY ADAMS

KROY MEN

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African Ivory Mystery

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AFRICAN IVORY MYSTERY

CHAPTER I

Beware Strangers!

"I GET luggage, mister?"

Biff Brewster looked at the African version of a skycap. The little man wore an untidy beard on his face and a dirty turban on his head. Bony elbows peeked out through the sleeves of his tattered old brown coat.

"No, no, thanks," answered Biff. "I'm waiting for my uncle. I'll get the luggage when he arrives."

"Him late?" The little man pressed the conversation, obviously hoping to wangle at least part of a shilling as a tip from his blond, youthful prospect.

"No," said Biff. "My plane landed about twenty minutes early. I'll just have to wait until my uncle gets here."

"First time in Nairobi?"

"Yes," said Biff politely. "First time in any part of Africa."

"Maybe I get luggage, yes?" the man persisted.

Biff shook his head, somewhat annoyed. The self-appointed porter spotted another prospect and moved off.

Biff strolled around the large waiting room. He was surprised to find such a modern air terminal in Africa, smack on the equator. He kept watching the front entrance, expecting his uncle, Warren Becker, to come through at any moment.

But the moments stretched into minutes, and the minutes began to get longer and longer.

Biff flopped down on a bench to rest. It felt good to sit down even though he had been sitting so long. He was weary. He had traveled for two nights and a day, flying from his home in Indianapolis to New York and then on to London. There he had taken another four-engine plane which made fuel stops at Rome, Khartoum in the Sudan, and Entebbe, Uganda, and finally landed in Nairobi at about 6:30 Saturday morning.

He knew that after one good night's sleep he would be ready to go on the ten-day safari with his uncle.

He had been looking forward to it for weeks. But the plane trip certainly had been tiring, even for a husky sixteen-year-old.

"Oh, well," he said to himself, "guess Uncle Warren got tied up. He'll be along."

He opened his mouth in a long yawn, stretched his arms, and closed his eyes to rest them.

When he opened his eyes again, he was startled for a moment. Two short, slight men, obviously native, but dressed in ill-fitting European clothes, were standing in front of him.

The darker of the two spoke up. "Mr. Brewster?" he inquired.

"Yes, that's me."

"I am G. Carfu," explained the man. "This is G. Wallo."

"How do you do," said Biff, somewhat puzzled. Before he had a chance to say more, the man called Carfu spoke again.

"We come from your uncle to fetch you," he said in careful English.

"Oh no, not again!" said Biff.

He was recalling his adventures while solving the *Mystery of the Chinese Ring*. He had landed at the airport in Rangoon and had been kidnaped by a stranger who also had posed as a friend sent to fetch him. Biff wasn't going to take any chances on a similar thing happening this time.

"Do you have any proof that my uncle sent you?" he asked. Then as an afterthought, he added, "What's my uncle's name?"

"His name is Mr. Warren Becker," G. Wallo replied promptly.

"That's right," admitted Biff. "Do you work for him?"

"No, but he had to go on an errand. He sent us to fetch you."

"Can I talk to him by phone?" Biff had a strong feeling that something was not right.

"Sorry," said G. Carfu, "you cannot reach him by phone. We take you to him."

The two little men took positions on each side of Biff. Carfu grasped the boy's elbow gently and urged him to rise.

"I've got to get my luggage," said Biff, trying to stall until he could think what to do.

"We will arrange for getting luggage. You come with us!"

Biff was sure now this situation was not adding up correctly. He moved slowly between the two men and looked around for anyone who might be able to help him.

The few people in the terminal all seemed to be natives of different types. He was sure none of them would understand English if he did speak out.

As Biff and the two strangers walked slowly across

the lobby, Biff spotted two sailors, dressed in white, gawking in the window of the Terminal Gift Shop. American gobs!

Biff veered toward the two window shoppers. When he was only a few feet away, he called out, "Hey, you guys!"

The two sailors swung around, grinning broadly. They seemed happy to hear American English spoken in this faraway place. One of them, a large, muscular man, answered.

"Hi there, buddy. American, aren't you?"

"Yup," said Biff, moving closer to them. "I'm Biff Brewster from Indianapolis."

"Well, what do you know!" said the big sailor. "I'm a Hoosier, too. From South Bend. You know where the University of Notre Dame is?"

"Why, sure," said Biff, delighted with his good luck. "I hope to go to Notre Dame myself, when I finish high school."

"Hey, that's something!"

The big sailor grabbed Biff's hand and shook it vigorously.

"My name's Butch Hutchins. This here is my pal, Little Monty Walgren. He's from Montana."

Walgren was an unusually small man, about a foot shorter than Butch, and at least 75 pounds lighter than the big sailor.

The sailors told Biff they were on a three-day

leave from the U. S. cruiser *Tacoma*. The ship had put into port at Mombasa for repairs. They had flown inland to tour Nairobi and were waiting for the plane to take them back to the ship.

Carfu and Wallo began to show impatience with the delay. They tried to hurry Biff.

"We must go now, Mr. Brewster. Your uncle will be waiting." Carfu again grabbed Biff's elbow.

Biff pulled his arm away with a deliberate yank to indicate his annoyance.

Big Butch spoke up.

"Say, are these birds bothering you, pal?"

Biff explained that he had never seen them before. He said they claimed to have been sent by his uncle, but that he doubted it. Surely his uncle would have given them some kind of written message if he could not come himself.

Big Butch folded his arms in front of him and looked down hard at the two small men, as if waiting for an explanation.

Little Monty tugged at the big sailor's sleeve.

"Look, Butch," he pleaded, "we don't want to land in the brig again. Let's mind our own business and get out of here."

Butch shrugged off his friend's hand and hunched his shoulders.

"Listen, chum," he said, "any American in trouble *is* our business."

Little Monty tossed up his hands in a gesture of resignation.

"OK, Butch," he said. "Brig or no brig, I'm with you all the way."

Biff breathed a sigh of relief and began to feel a great deal more secure.

Butch faced the two natives again. He had his hands on his hips now, and spoke defiantly.

"Well, chums, just where is this fine upstanding American boy supposed to go? Maybe we can go along with him."

"I'm—I'm afraid you can't do that!" said Carfu, obviously disturbed by this turn of events and also somewhat frightened by the big man's threatening look.

"And why can't we go?" Butch was ready for anything and seemed to be just aching for a fight.

Wallo exchanged glances with his partner and spoke quickly. "We have instructions from Mr. Becker. His nephew is to come alone."

"Why?" Butch asked bluntly.

"It is a confidential matter," Wallo put in smoothly.

The big sailor turned to Biff. "You believe that, pal?"

"No, I honestly don't, Butch."

"Then we'll just wait awhile until we hear from your uncle himself. You two guys got any objections?"

Carfu and Wallo looked at each other for a moment. Then, without saying a word, they turned and left the terminal.

"Gee, thanks, fellows," said Biff. "Maybe my uncle did send those men, but I don't think so. There was something about them I didn't like."

"I don't blame you," said Butch. "They looked like a couple of phonies to me, too."

Monty spoke up. "Like Shakespeare said, 'There's something rotten in Nairobi!'"

"This guy is always quoting Shakespeare," kidded Butch. "I keep telling him, he ought to be on the stage—he would be better off."

Biff chuckled at the play on words.

"All kidding aside, Biff," continued Butch, "do you think your uncle will come?"

"My uncle surely would have sent a note if he couldn't come himself."

"Maybe he had to hurry away and didn't have time to give those guys a note."

"Maybe," said Biff doubtfully. "I guess I'll phone the New Stanley Hotel. That's where Uncle Warren is staying."

From a clerk in a store, he was able to get local currency in exchange for a United States five-dollar bill. He was given some paper notes, each of 5 shillings value, and a handful of copper and nickel

coins. The copper coins, worth 1, 5, and 10 cents, had holes in the middle. The nickel coins were valued at 50 cents and one shilling. The East African shilling, 20 to the pound in line with the British monetary system, is the basic unit of currency in Kenya.

After consulting the telephone directory, Biff entered the modern glass phone booth, deposited 25 cents, and dialed the hotel number.

Although Warren Becker was registered, no one answered his room phone.

Puzzled, Biff went back to his two new friends and said that he would just have to wait and see if any word did come from Mr. Becker.

"We can stay a little while longer," said Butch, "but we don't have too much time."

"Thank you very much. You two are real friends." Biff was grateful for their concern about him. "But you really don't have to wait. I can manage all right by myself."

"Sure you can," remarked Butch. "But we Americans has got to stick together."

The three chatted about Indiana for several minutes, but Biff kept scanning the lobby and the front entrance, hoping he would see his uncle.

Then Monty reminded Butch that their plane would be taking off in a few minutes.

"Sorry, but we do have to leave now," said Butch.

"We're due back on board tonight. If we miss this plane to Mombasa, we'll have to wait until tomorrow morning."

Little Monty chimed in. "That means the brig again and another big fat demerit on my Navy record."

Butch kidded his friend. "What is it you're trying to be, an admiral or something, Monty?" he demanded.

"No, just a freedom-loving sailor boy," Monty returned. "We have only two minutes, Butch. Come on!"

"OK, keep your shirt on." Butch turned to Biff and held out his hand for a farewell handshake.

"Guess we really have to go now, Biff," he said. "Hope everything will work out for you."

"Don't worry about me, Butch. Good luck. Hope I'll see you two fellows again."

"Hope so."

Biff watched the two sailors run toward the boarding gate with a little feeling of regret. He had enjoyed the short acquaintance, and it could well be that Butch and Monty had helped him out of a tough spot.

But for the life of him, Biff couldn't figure why there should be any problem about his arrival. He was just planning to go on a ten-day safari with his uncle during summer vacation. Why should there be any mystery about a simple thing like that?

He phoned the hotel again without success and left a message for his uncle that he was waiting at the airport. He claimed his luggage and flopped down on a long bench to wait. He saw no sign of the two men who had approached him and decided it would be safe to doze for a few moments.

Suddenly, half asleep, he felt a sharp point in his side. Someone spoke to him very quietly—someone who had slipped behind the bench.

“Now no more funny moves, Mr. Brewster. This knife is sharp and fast.”

Biff was surprised to see that once again he was flanked by Carfu and Wallo. Only now the two men had dropped all pretense. From the expressions on their faces, Biff knew that this time they were determined to force him to accompany them.

CHAPTER II

Interpol Calling

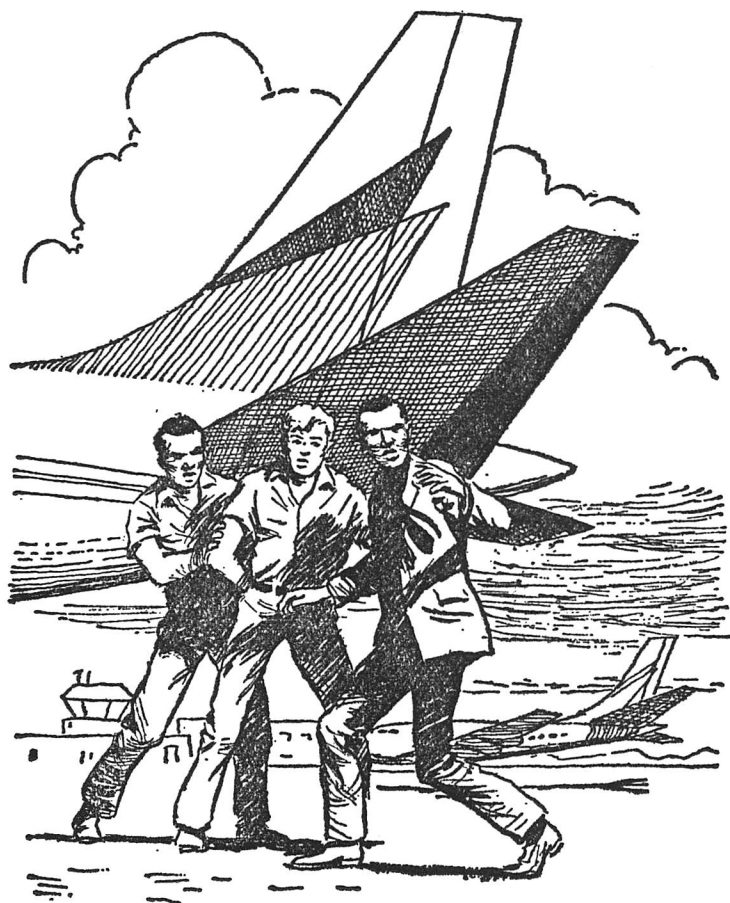
BIFF rose slowly from the bench, wondering if he dared try to outrun that knife.

Carfu apparently read his thoughts, for he moved nearer to him, and jabbed the concealed knife close to Biff's ribs.

"You are warned, Mr. Brewster," he said in a low, menacing voice. "Any tricks and I will be forced to use this knife."

"OK!" said Biff, "I get the point," and he laughed feebly at his own joke.

He picked up his luggage and began to walk slowly toward the exit. The two men were on each side.



"Any tricks, and I will be forced to use this knife!"

Biff thought how fortunate it would be if Butch and Little Monty had missed their plane and would come back to the terminal. But he realized this was selfish of him. He would find a way out of the situation somehow.

Suddenly, Carfu muttered a few Swahili words to Wallo. The two men turned on their heels and hurried off, leaving Biff, somewhat bewildered, standing by himself. He watched his would-be abductors walk, then break into a run toward the rear exit of the terminal. What could have happened? Then he heard his name called.

"Biff! Biff!"

Warren Becker, a well-built man about thirty-five years of age and medium height, had just come in by the front entrance and was hurrying toward his nephew.

Relieved, Biff rushed to meet his uncle.

"I'm sure glad to see you come in that door, Uncle Warren!" he exclaimed.

"Sorry I'm late, Biff," Uncle Warren apologized. "A crazy cab driver got me all tangled up in a traffic jam on the busiest side street in Nairobi. It's a wonder I'm here yet."

Biff told his uncle of his strange experience.

"It could be tied up with a special job we've been asked to do," Uncle Warren said slowly, but his nephew could see he was thinking hard.

"Special job? What kind of a job?" Biff asked curiously.

"I'll tell you on the way," Mr. Becker said. "Let's go."

The airport, located in Embakasi, was ten miles from the city. The cab moved slowly along Princess Elizabeth Way. Biff was fascinated by the blue jacaranda trees and the vivid colors of the bougainvillea which lined the parkway.

"We have been asked by the International Police Criminal Organization to help them get evidence on some smugglers," explained Uncle Warren.

"Is that the group called Interpol?" Biff asked.

"That's right. Apparently you've heard of it." Mr. Warren smiled.

"Oh, sure. It's a sort of International FBI among many nations."

"That's the general idea, Biff," said his uncle. "They have complete files, and they supply information and assistance in capturing international criminals."

"Sounds exciting," Biff exclaimed. "What are we supposed to do?"

"Well, they want us to help get evidence on an ivory-smuggling ring that has been operating in Kenya and northern Tanganyika," Uncle Warren told Biff.

"How are we supposed to get this evidence?" Biff

was warming up to the challenge of the unknown.

Warren Becker explained that Interpol felt that since he was a well-known amateur hunter in these parts, he would not be suspected by the smugglers. Perhaps he could get close to the center of their operations without arousing suspicion.

"Where do I come in?" asked Biff.

"Your being along will make the set-up more convincing," his uncle explained. "Of course, we still will hunt as we planned. Only we'll have to keep our eyes and ears open and try to get some leads in the area where they are operating."

"Ought to be fun," remarked Biff.

"I should warn you that there is some danger involved," Warren Becker said seriously.

"Oh?"

"Because of this, I phoned your father in Indianapolis," Mr. Becker went on. "He said the decision of whether you should go on the safari as planned is entirely up to you."

Biff felt a thrill of pride in the confidence which both his uncle and his father had indicated in him.

"I'll go along, of course, Uncle Warren. Nothing could keep me away," he said.

"I knew you'd say that, Biff." Uncle Warren smiled affectionately.

"What about those two birds at the airport—the two 'G-men'—G. Carfu and G. Wallo? Do you

think they were trying to scare me or you out of taking on this assignment?" Biff asked.

"I don't know how they would have learned about this, Biff. I spoke to Mr. Tambouri in private," Uncle Warren said, puzzled.

"Tambouri? Who is he?"

"Head of Interpol in Kenya."

Biff snapped his fingers.

"I think I know how this information might have leaked out."

"How?"

"When you phoned Dad to explain about the assignment, did you call from the hotel?"

"Why, yes!"

"Well, perhaps the phone clerk at the hotel overheard you and reported it to the smugglers. Carfu and Wallo may be part of the gang."

"By George, you might have something there, Biff," Uncle Warren replied. "And that cab driver—I'll bet he delayed me on purpose."

"Certainly seems to add up that way, Uncle."

"Well, let's not jump to conclusions. We'll ask Tambouri's opinion on this. We'll be seeing him in a short while."

"We're going to the Interpol office now?" asked Biff.

"Yes. I haven't given Tambouri our final answer yet."

"What if we're being followed?" Biff was cautious. "Then they'll surely find out our connection with Interpol."

"You've got a good point. We might be followed. Until we know who's who and what's what, we need to be careful. I've got an idea."

Becker directed the driver to turn off on Station Road. The two left the cab at the railway station. They hurried to a different exit, and boarded another cab. In a few minutes they arrived in front of the East African High Commission Building in another part of the city.

They took the elevator to the eighth floor, walked to the end of a long corridor, and entered a small two-room business office.

They were greeted by a tall, light-skinned African. The man apparently had been educated at one of the universities in England, for he spoke faultless English.

"I am delighted to see you again, Mr. Becker," he said.

"Nice to see you, Mr. Tambouri," said Uncle Warren. "This is my nephew, Biff Brewster."

"Your uncle has told me about you, Biff," Mr. Tambouri said. "Welcome to Nairobi." Biff liked the man's firm handshake.

Mr. Tambouri told them Interpol had an agent in each of the seventy-odd member countries. Each agent

was a citizen of that country and had the job of uncovering information and evidence on international crimes and causing the arrests of international criminals by the police of the nations involved.

Each nation had a very small staff and often had to rely on trusted local persons for help. Mr. Tambouri emphasized the great risk involved in this work, both for the agent and for those who worked with him.

"International crimes usually involve hundreds of thousands of dollars," Mr. Tambouri said. "Playing for such high stakes, international criminals hold cheaply the lives of those who interfere with their profitable illegal traffic."

"Would you explain further what you want us to do?" Biff's uncle asked.

"Yes, certainly," said Mr. Tambouri, going to a wall map. He used a pencil as a pointer.

"We know there has been a criminal ring engaged in smuggling ivory just north of Kenya, here in Somalia," he said. "The ivory is transported to the coast and then secretly shipped to this island, Zanzibar. From there it goes to foreign ports."

"Have you tried to trap the smugglers in Somalia, sir?" asked Biff.

"Oh, yes. Both the local authorities in Somalia and Interpol have tried. But the crime ring there is too well organized. The smuggling trade has been going

on so long that the criminals have worked out all the angles carefully. If we want to stop the operation in Kenya, we'll have to do it soon—before it gets too well organized here.”

“I see,” said Biff, anxious to hear more.

Mr. Tambouri invited them to sit down and then moved into his own chair behind a desk.

“We have reason to believe this ring is beginning to expand its operation in Kenya and northern Tanganyika,” he went on. “If we can get evidence early, we can nip the ring before it gets out of hand.”

“Do you think it is already a good-sized operation?” Warren Becker asked.

“We don’t know. Certainly it’s getting larger all the time. The government is concerned not only with the loss of revenue, but with the wanton and illegal destruction of thousands of elephants. The species will be wiped out of existence in this area in a couple of years if such indiscriminate killing isn’t stopped.”

“Like the American buffalo?” asked Biff.

“Exactly. Big-game hunting is one of the main industries in this country. If we permit game to be killed without proper controls, the hunting industry will die.”

Mr. Tambouri then pointed out the danger involved in the mission. “But,” he concluded, “the government will be most grateful if you can help us get

evidence that will lead to the arrests of the leaders in this smuggling racket."

After a few moments of silence, Mr. Tambouri added, "I do hope you will help us."

Uncle Warren informed the agent that he and Biff already had decided to accept the challenge.

"Wonderful! Wonderful!" Mr. Tambouri obviously was delighted.

Biff then told of his experience at the airport and asked if this could have had any connection with the mission.

"I don't know," the agent replied thoughtfully. "International crime rings have paid informers everywhere. They might have gotten wind of my request to Mr. Becker."

"You think it might have been someone in this office?" Warren Becker asked. "Someone who was here when I talked with you before?"

Mr. Tambouri shook his head. "I don't see how. There are only three men here, and they have been with me for several years."

"Uncle Warren phoned my dad in the United States from the hotel. Perhaps he was overheard," Biff suggested.

"That is a possibility. But there may be another explanation."

"What is that, Mr. Tambouri?"

"Well, just a few weeks ago, in Stanleyville in the

Congo, a British girl was kidnaped and held for a large ransom, which was paid."

"You think then that probably these men were trying to kidnap Biff for ransom?"

"It is not out of the realm of possibility, Mr. Becker."

"Boy, I guess I didn't realize what a close call I had," remarked Biff.

"This is a strange country, Biff," explained Mr. Tambouri. "Civilization is coming here rapidly. But we are still a wild country."

"I'm learning more about it every minute," commented Biff.

"Take this city of Nairobi, for example," the agent went on. "It's called the 'City in the Sun.' It has over a quarter of a million inhabitants."

"From what I saw from the cab, I'd say it is a very modern city," said Biff.

"Yes, it is. Fifty years ago, Nairobi was nothing but a railway construction camp consisting of a few shacks." Mr. Tambouri straightened some papers on his desk, and continued, "Travel a little way out of Nairobi and you will find vast rolling plains and dense bush and forest, filled with wild animal life. And you will also find native tribes as primitive as their ancestors of generations ago."

The agent also told Biff a great deal more about

Interpol and the great service which the organization renders to the member nations in fighting international crimes.

Since Interpol identification cards were to be issued to Biff and his uncle, they both left samples of their signatures.

"The identification cards will be delivered to you in two days, just before you leave on the safari," Mr. Tambouri told them.

"Why do we need ID cards?" asked Biff.

"In case you require help from the police. But," warned Mr. Tambouri, "please guard these cards. If they should fall into the wrong hands, they very easily could be used by criminals to learn the plans of the police."

On the way to the New Stanley Hotel, Mr. Becker ordered the cab driver to take a long route so Biff could see some of the modern buildings that lined the main streets.

"Reminds me of a thriving American city," remarked Biff.

"That's right," said Uncle Warren, "and probably a lot cleaner than most."

While changing clothes at the hotel, Biff handed his uncle a small package.

"What is this, Biff?"

"A present from Ted and Monica."

"The twins! How are those two little devils, anyway?" asked Uncle Warren.

"Not so little any more, Uncle Warren. They're eleven years old now and getting tall."

"I'd sure love to see them again," commented Mr. Becker. "Guess it's at least two years since I saw them last."

"Ted wanted to come with me," said Biff.

"I'm afraid he is still a little too young to go on a big-game hunt." Uncle Warren laughed.

"That's what Dad told him, but you know Mother and Dad both feel that travel is important to our education."

"Yes, and I think they're right, Biff. I'm glad they permit you to visit different countries. You're learning a great deal about the world."

"I sure am, Uncle Warren. It's a wonderful way to spend part of a summer vacation."

The gift was a bright yellow cotton neckerchief.

"This will come in handy when we ride over the dusty plains," Biff's uncle said. "It'll keep the sand from going down my neck. I have one for you too."

Later that evening they had a steak dinner in the hotel dining room with Eric Mathews, the White Hunter, who would be in charge of the safari.

"Just where did the expression, 'White Hunter,' come from, Mr. Mathews?" asked Biff.

"Oh, I imagine it was used originally only to distinguish between native and white guides," said Mathews. "Then the white men formed the East African Professional Hunters Association and adopted the title to show that a man was a certified member of the association."

Just before dessert, Mathews announced that he had accepted another client to go on the safari. "His name is Wendell Henderson," he said.

"British?" Uncle Warren asked.

"Yes, a British businessman. He is in Kenya for several weeks on a business trip. Somehow he heard of our safari and asked if he could come along with us."

"Can you take along three hunters, Mr. Mathews?" asked Mr. Becker. "I thought the law permitted only two hunters with one guide."

"That is true," said Mathews, "but I understood Biff would register only for a permit to shoot birds and small animals. The law allows one White Hunter to two clients with game licenses, but a third man can go along with the safari on a small game and bird permit."

"Oh!" said Becker. "That's true. Biff may be ready for a full game license on his next safari."

"Of course, I can tell Mr. Henderson that we can't take him, if you prefer," said Mathews. "But ac-

tually he offered to pay more than his share of the expenses, so I thought his coming along would be acceptable to you."

"It's perfectly all right," Uncle Warren said. "You have no objections, have you, Biff?"

"No, the more the merrier."

"Fine," Mathews exclaimed. "You'll have a chance to meet him tomorrow night. He plans to join us for dinner."

For the next hour, they discussed some of the game regulations, the schedule, the itinerary Mathews had mapped out, and many of the details of the safari, some still to be attended to.

Biff and his uncle were up early the next morning and attended Sunday church service at the undenominational Nairobi Chapel. They spent several hours doing more sightseeing around the city before stopping to have lunch.

Biff was impressed with the great variety of people he saw. There were Europeans, Africans, and Asians. There were Astrakhans, capped men from India; bearded and turbaned Sikhs; and even some half-naked Masai herdsmen walking in the streets. Some of the women wore exotic silk saris.

There were several Kikuyu market gardeners carrying baskets cascading with brilliant tropical flowers. In the curio markets, Biff was fascinated by the

Kamba wood carvers who were making attractive figurines from polished hardwood.

The Royal Technical College of East Africa also interested Biff. This was a technical school for all races and offered courses in engineering, the arts, commerce, and other subjects.

"Mr. Tambouri was right when he said this is a land of contrast," said Biff.

Immediately after lunch, they obtained the game license and permit and then shopped for the additional clothing they would need on the safari. Mathews had ordered most of the gear, but Uncle Warren bought Biff a wide-brimmed felt hat and a pair of hunting boots.

That evening they had dinner again with Mathews, and this time were joined by their new safari companion, Wendell Henderson. Mr. Henderson, a graying, heavy-set man, appeared to be an entertaining talker, and Biff and his uncle both felt they would enjoy his company on the trek, although he seemed rather opinionated and a little overbearing in his conversation.

After discussing final details, Mathews said they should be ready to leave at 5:30 in the morning. He promised to send a car to fetch them. The safari crew would gather on Enterprise Road, where it crossed the city line.

Biff and his uncle then left to attend a drama performance at the famous National Theater. This was a particularly enjoyable experience for Biff. He had read about the theater in his drama class in high school, but he had never dreamed he actually would be in Nairobi and see a performance in this famous building.

After the show, since it was a clear, crisp evening, Biff and his uncle decided to walk back to the hotel, which was less than a dozen blocks away.

As they started to cross a broad street called Bazaar Road, Biff looked past his uncle. Then he yelled, "Look out!"

CHAPTER III

On with the Safari

A CAR had sped out of an alley and was bearing down on them swiftly. Biff instinctively grabbed his uncle's arm and roughly yanked him to one side.

They both fell to the pavement. The car passed within inches of their feet.

"Boy, that was a close one!" Uncle Warren exclaimed. "I'm certainly glad you spotted him coming, Biff."

As they were brushing off their clothes, Biff looked at his uncle.

"Do you think that was a drunken driver?" he asked.

"I'm not sure. That thought ran through my mind, but—"

Biff interrupted him. "I think he was coming right for *us!*"

"Actually it seemed that way, Biff," Mr. Brewster agreed. "But we're not sure, so let's not jump to conclusions too fast."

"Well, that deal at the airport, and then Mr. Tambouri's warning, and now almost getting knocked off by a speeding car—"

"I know, Biff. It doesn't add up right," said his uncle, "but perhaps we're a little jumpy. Let's not worry about it until we're sure there is something to worry about."

"OK," said Biff, but he thought he read real concern on his uncle's face.

Very early the next morning, just as Biff and his uncle had finished dressing, there was a quiet rap on the door. Biff opened it, and the man who stood there identified himself as Mr. Erudu from the Interpol office. He was short, heavy-set, dark in complexion, and had a noticeable scar on his forehead over his right eye.

"I have a letter to Mr. Becker from Mr. Tambouri," he announced.

Uncle Warren took the envelope and opened it. In it were two identification cards, and a note which he began to read aloud. This made reference to the im-

portance of safeguarding the ID cards. Then he stopped reading and studied the message, frowning thoughtfully.

"What else does the note say?" asked Biff.

"Oh—I'm sorry. I'll finish reading it to you," his uncle said. "It says, 'We have reason to believe the smuggling ring may have informers planted in strategic places, maybe even including the police force. Be careful whom you trust. Suggest you destroy this note after reading. Signed, Efrim Tambouri.'"

"Mr. Tambouri sure keeps reminding us of the danger, doesn't he?" commented Biff.

"Yes. He must have good reasons for this."

Mr. Erudu interrupted. "Pardon me," he said, "but if you wish to withdraw from the mission, I shall be happy to return the identification cards. Mr. Tambouri will understand, I am sure."

"There is no reason for that, Mr. Erudu," said Warren Becker, somewhat annoyed at the inference in the man's suggestion. "You may inform Mr. Tambouri that we have every intention of carrying out our mission."

Biff looked at his uncle with pride. Uncle Warren surely didn't scare easily.

"As you will, Mr. Becker," replied Erudu. "I am sure Mr. Tambouri will be pleased. Of course, you are accepting at your own risk. My best wishes to you. Perhaps we shall meet again sometime."

When the man had left, Biff and his uncle discussed Erudu's actions and statements.

"He actually seemed anxious not to have us work for Interpol," remarked Biff.

"He certainly is a strange one," said Mr. Becker, and then added in his usual cautious way, "but until we're sure, we must assume that Mr. Erudu merely wanted to emphasize the fact that we may be heading for trouble."

"That's probably right, Uncle Warren. Let's get some breakfast. I'm starved."

Half an hour later, at 5:30 in the morning, Biff and his uncle climbed into a Land Rover driven to the hotel by a native driver named Mao. The Land Rover was a four-wheel-drive station wagon with opened sides and a movable roof which slid back to permit someone to stand in the car to observe or take pictures.

The sun had already risen and was beginning to feel warm.

Mao was dressed in shorts and wore well-worn, low white sneakers. Tiny loops of wire hung from the ends of his elongated ear lobes.

"I'll bet he is one of the Kikuyu tribes," whispered Biff to his uncle. He knew the Kikuyu usually pierced the ears of both male and female children and added weights so the ear lobes would hang down in long loops.

It took almost twenty minutes to reach the city line of Nairobi where the rest of the safari crew were waiting.

Transportation for the safari consisted of the four-wheel-drive Land Rover and a hunting car, especially constructed with large seats, open sides, movable roof for observation, and a gun rack. They also had a truck which would carry the tentage, equipment, spare water, petrol, food, and the African staff. There was room in the truck for whatever trophies they might bring back.

"Can I help check the equipment with you, Mr. Mathews?" Biff asked. He thought this would be a good chance to learn what was being carried on the safari.

"That would be fine, Biff," said Mathews. "I can use all the help I can get."

The equipment included several double-fly sleeping tents, a kitchen tent, folding chairs, folding beds with thin rubber mattresses, a long canvas bathtub, cooking utensils, a kerosene stove, crockery, and several hurricane lamps.

"Looks like we're going to live in luxury on the trip," remarked Biff.

"You'll get used to it," his uncle said.

"How many bottles of 6-12 do we have in that box, Biff?" asked Mathews.

"Oh, the insect repellent—well, let's see." Biff counted eight medium-sized bottles. "Boy, we must be expecting a lot of insects," he laughed.

"They'll be after us almost every foot of the way," explained Mathews. "I hope we have enough repellent to last us."

The firearms consisted of several rifles of various calibres. There was a 12-gauge shotgun, and a .22 rifle that could be used for birds.

"That .22 will be your baby, Biff," said his uncle, pointing it out.

"I can only use it on birds?" asked Biff.

"Birds and the small dik-dik antelope," explained Mathews. "The .22 is not permitted for any other game animal."

They also had several medium-and light-caliber weapons which would be used for most of their shooting. There was a .300(30/06) Springfield; a .350 Rigby Magnum; and a 9.3 m.m. Mauser. Becker had his own personal rifle, a .375 Winchester.

Two other double-barreled, hammerless rifles were stacked in the gun rack.

"What are these big guns used for?" Biff asked the White Hunter.

"For large animals like buffaloes and rhinos, and for dangerous animals like lions and leopards," explained Mathews.

Besides Biff, Becker, Henderson, and Mathews, the

crew was to consist of nine natives, referred to as "boys." These men served as drivers, cooks, waiters, skimmers, porters, and tent servants.

After all the equipment had been checked, Mathews looked at his watch.

"Guess we can't wait any longer. We better move on."

"Why were we waiting?" asked Biff.

"Two of the boys haven't shown up," said Mathews. "We are going to be somewhat short-handed, but it's too late to find replacements now."

Biff felt a thrill of excitement as the cars started and moved out onto the plains. Soon the city behind them was out of sight.

The caravan moved like a group of determined beetles on the grass-covered plain, which was studded with flat-top acacia trees and sprawling thorn bushes. Here and there they passed the edges of thick forests and jungles.

"What in the world are those? Buffaloes?" Biff asked, as they spotted a herd of large creatures several hundred yards to their left.

"They're gnus," said Mathews. "Their heavy heads and shoulders do remind you of the American buffalo."

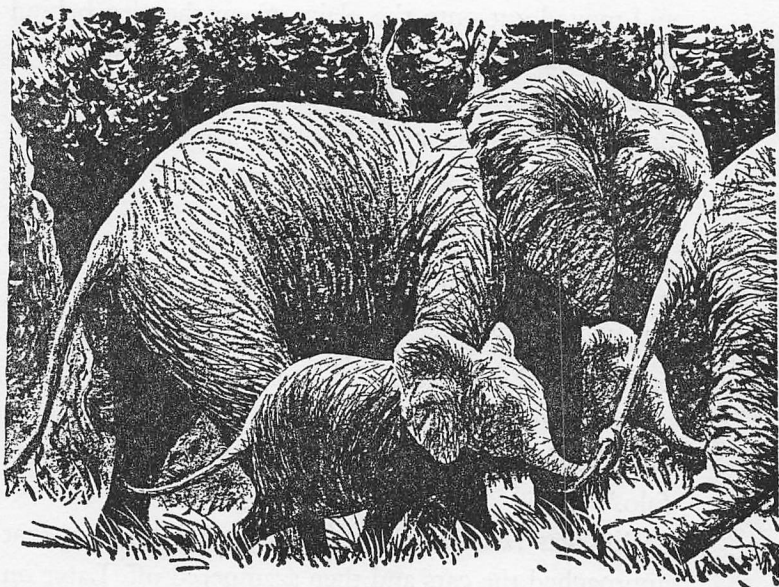
Biff was fascinated by a family of wildebeest that approached the cars and then scampered off. Later on they passed a herd of Thompson's gazelles. Biff got a

big laugh out of the way the fly-switched tails of the gazelles spun around like the blades of a small electric fan.

"What's that noise?" asked Biff. It sounded like thunder.

"Stop the cars!" yelled Mathews as he stood up in the Land Rover. He waved his arms to the other drivers.

A cloud of dust approached them, and the drumming grew louder. In a few minutes, they were completely surrounded by a sea of galloping and fright-

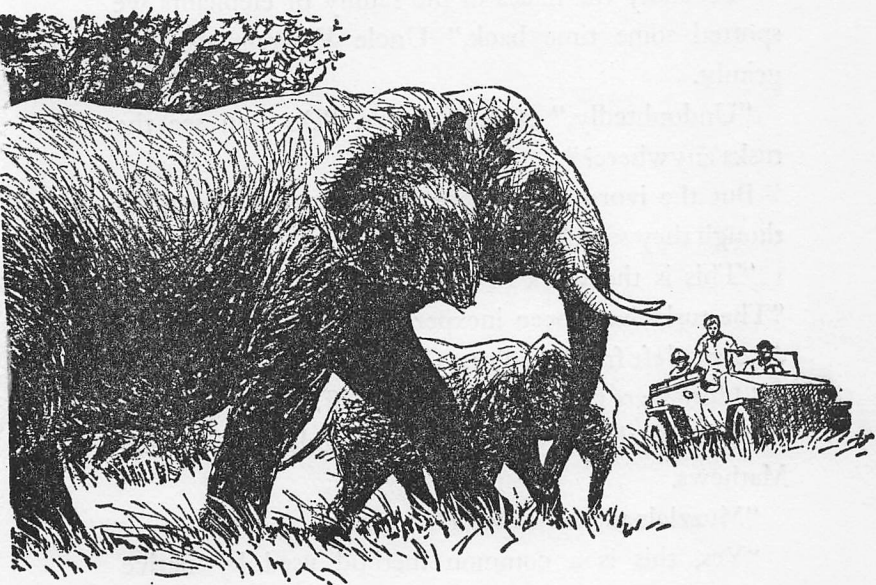


ened zebras that seemed to be racing away from some unseen danger. Several of the beautiful striped creatures scraped the sides of the car as they sped by. It was five minutes before the last of the animals had run past them.

"How much farther do we ride before we start hunting?" asked Biff.

"Oh, another hour's drive will bring us to where there should be some interesting game," said Mathews. "Then we can have some lunch."

Sometime later, they passed three cow elephants.



Two small calves were staying close to them, like little children, for protection. At that moment Biff realized he was glad he would not be shooting any of the game animals. At first, he had felt a little bit disappointed, but now he was sure he would not want to harm them.

Farther on, they came to a sight which gave Biff a sickening feeling in his stomach.

The two cars and the truck disturbed a large group of ravenous vultures that were fighting to rip chunks of flesh from the carcasses of what apparently had been two elephants.

"Probably the males in the family of elephants we spotted some time back," Uncle Warren observed grimly.

"Undoubtedly," said Mathews. "Do you see the tusks anywhere?"

But the ivory tusks were nowhere to be seen, although they searched a wide area.

"This is the work of poachers," said Mr. Becker. "The tusks have been inexpertly hacked out, and the carcasses left for the vultures."

"How were they killed?" asked Biff.

"I figure they were killed by muzzleloaders," said Mathews.

"Muzzleloaders?" asked Henderson.

"Yes, this is a common method used by native poachers," Mathews explained. "Guns are improvised

from piping, which is stuffed with rusty nails and jagged stones."

"They can't miss if they're shooting at an elephant," said Biff.

"No, of course not. These homemade guns are fired into a herd of animals, maiming them indiscriminately. The animals that are hit usually perish by degrees—from gangrene or hunger and thirst."

"I suppose the two male elephants moved out in front when they were being attacked, and got the full blast of the shot?" said Biff.

"Very likely," Mathews said. "This must have happened several days ago. The poachers finished off the wounded elephants, hacked out their tusks, and left them."

"The females and the calves probably waited in the area for the males," suggested Biff, "and then decided they were not coming back to the herd and moved off."

"That's about the size of it, Biff," the White Hunter agreed, nodding.

Biff then realized the seriousness of the mission on which he and his uncle had agreed to help.

Camp, consisting of six tents, was finally set up beneath a group of acacia trees. Biff had gone camping many times before, but somehow this time was different. All the mystery that was Africa seemed to come alive at night.

This was Biff's first night out on the African plains. He felt very tired, and his arms ached from the continual swatting at the hordes of insects that had been attacking him all day. He had splashed a great amount of 6-12 on his hands and face earlier, and again just before dinner, but somehow the insects were not all repelled by the repellent.

Mathews had managed to shoot an antelope, and they had antelope steak and canned beans for dinner. They were all tired, so the conversation at dinner was in a light vein and mostly about the animals they had seen during the day.

Biff drew laughter from the rest when he remarked, "Now I know what people mean when they say, 'Africa gets under your skin'—they're referring to the insects."

After Biff and Uncle Warren had turned in, in the tent they shared, Biff lay awake on his cot for some time. He was fascinated by the dismal howls of the hyenas, the chatter of monkeys, the symphony of bird whistles, and the distant screeches that pierced the sultry night. Finally, exhausted but happy, he fell asleep.

Toward morning, he was awakened by the sound of excited babbling outside his tent. He glanced across the tent and saw that Uncle Warren was already out of his cot. Rifle in hand, he was pushing through the tent opening.

CHAPTER IV

Lion Hunt

BIFF rushed after his uncle, almost running into him as the latter stopped short just outside the tent.

“What is it?” the boy asked.

“Hold it, Biff! Quiet!”

The safari crew, apparently frightened, was backed up against the tents. Facing them, and about ten feet away, was a group of some twenty of the fiercest looking tribesmen Biff had ever seen.

All of these men were very tall and black skinned. Their hair was plaited in tight, mud-plastered braids. Most of them had necklaces of multi-colored beads around their long necks. Beside loin cloths, several had reddish togas draped around their bodies. All but

four of them wore large headdresses of lions' manes and ostrich feathers, which made them appear over seven feet tall. Most of them had long scars or claw marks on their bodies.

"My gosh!" said Biff.

"Don't move!" his uncle warned in a low voice. "These babies can be very touchy."

Biff studied the long spears several of the natives were holding in upraised position. These were formidable weapons. The blades were about four feet long and looked as sharp as razors. The shafts were of polished hardwood.

Each of the natives also carried a shield made of tough rhino hide and decorated in colorful designs. Those of them who were without spears held wicked-looking swords.

For several moments, the tenseness of the situation seemed to hold everyone in a frozen position. Then Mathews, rifle in hand, moved forward slowly and approached the leader of the group.

Uncle Warren leaned toward Biff and whispered, "Masai *morans*—warriors of the Masai Tribe, and they're tough!"

Biff recalled reading about the Masai. Although they were mostly cattle herders, they also were noted as fierce fighters and fearless hunters.

"Are they the famous lion hunters?" he asked.

His uncle nodded.

Wendell Henderson, who stood nearby, gave a nervous cough at this point. His self-confidence of the evening they had met him had vanished. He was obviously frightened and trying to conceal it in anger.

"What are we waiting for?" he cried and raised his rifle.

Warren Becker moved quickly and tore the weapon out of Henderson's hands.

"You fool!" Mr. Becker snapped. "Do you want us all murdered?"

Henderson almost shouted back. "We won't be! Not if we shoot first."

"Let Mathews handle this," Biff's uncle warned the Englishman.

The White Hunter continued to confer with the native leader for a long period. If he saw what had taken place between Wendell Henderson and Warren Becker, he gave no indication of it. Biff guessed that the Hunter did not want to display any sign of fear to the natives.

A few minutes later, Mathews walked back to his crew.

"They will do us no harm if we do not intrude on their hunting," he said.

"What are they after?" asked Biff.

"Lions," replied Mathews. "They have four boys with them who have to be in on a lion kill before they can become full-fledged warriors in their tribe."

"Sort of an initiation?" asked Biff.

"Yes. But they don't like outside interference. They can be dangerous."

At a command from their leader, the natives trotted away and soon were out of sight.

"What did you mean, they could be dangerous, Mr. Mathews?" asked Biff. "I suppose you told them we would not interfere."

"Yes, I promised that," explained Mathews. "But when they go on a hunt like this, they get drunk on a brew they cook up from ox blood and the bark of the acacia tree. Then they dance in a wild frenzy for a couple of days. For a while after that, no one knows what they might do."

"Sure," said Becker, "they're triggered pretty high. It wouldn't take much to get them started on a wild rampage."

Henderson stepped forward at this point. "We should have shot one of those savages," the Englishman declared. "That would stop them from any deviltry. They'd know we meant business."

"You don't think much of human life, do you, Henderson?" There was a definite note of annoyance in Warren Becker's voice.

"These savages are no different than wild animals," the other man said irritably.

"It's a good thing you did nothing foolish, Mr. Henderson," said Mathews.

Biff was somewhat surprised at Wendell Henderson's attitude. Definitely, he was not behaving like the typical sportsmanlike Englishman he had appeared to be at the start of the safari.

After breakfast, accompanied by four of the boys, Biff and his uncle, and Mathews and Henderson left in the hunting car and the Land Rover to look for game. The rest of the crew stayed in camp to clean up and guard the equipment.

A couple of hours passed before they spotted game of any size.

"Gosh, look at those babies jump!" exclaimed Biff, pointing to a herd of fleeing impala. The graceful animals leaped high and seemed to float in the air. By this time Biff had definitely made up his mind that he was not going to shoot any animal unless he had to in self-defense. Just being able to see these animals in their natural state was enough for him.

Wendell Henderson, however, killed four of the harmless impala before Mathews could stop him. Two of the victims were females.

The White Hunter warned Henderson. "The law allows only two impala per hunter, and these must be males!" he said.

Henderson shrugged off the warning. "That's one of those laws that apply only when you get caught," he snapped.

Mathews was visibly irritated by this attitude. "*I'm*

the law on the safari," he said. "I will not permit any further violations."

"All right, all right." Grumbling impatiently, Henderson climbed back into the Land Rover, and they started off again.

Later in the day they stopped near a water hole. A family of egrets flew up with a flurry of white wings. Then two crowned cranes strutted in front of them showing annoyance at their intrusion.

As the members of the safari were splashing water on their faces to cool off, shouts reached them from beyond some dense bushes which surrounded the water hole.

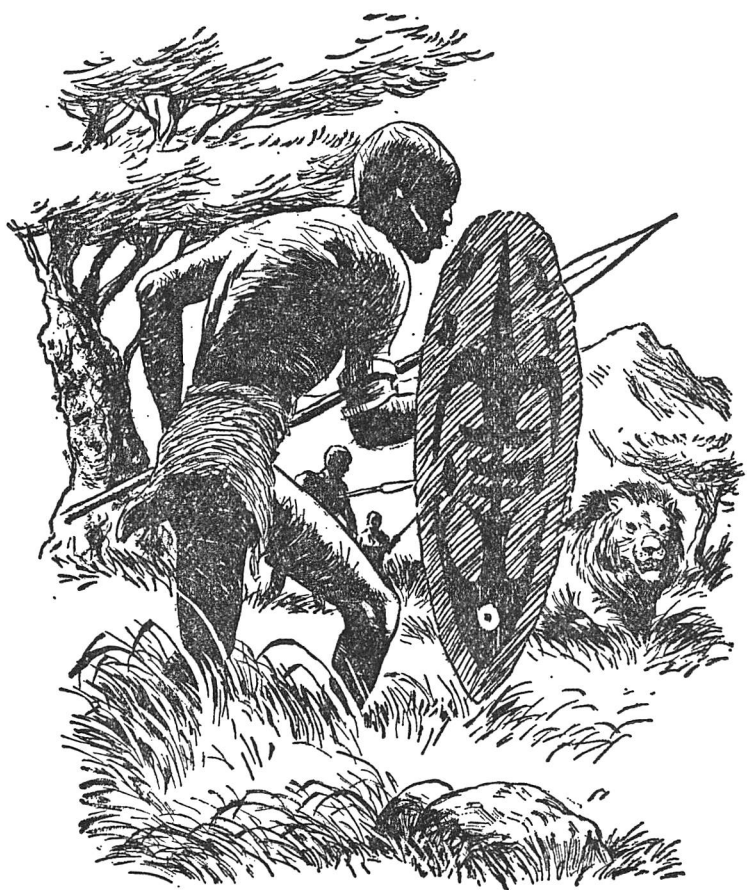
"Must be the Masai," suggested Mathews. "Maybe we can move into a position where we can watch what they are doing without disturbing them or getting them sore."

"Wouldn't that be dangerous?"

"Guess they won't mind," replied Mathews, "as long as we keep our distance."

They pushed through the brush toward the sound of the shouting. Mathews' guess had been correct.

The Masai tribesmen were formed in a wide circle around a good-sized lion. They seemed to be menacing and jeering at the bewildered beast. Slowly they moved in closer and closer to make the circle smaller. The lion, trapped in the center, was enraged and in panic because it saw no way to escape.



*The Masai tribesmen were formed in a wide circle
around the lion*

"What are they going to do now?" Biff asked the White Hunter.

"Just watch," Mathews said. "They're experts at this."

The lion feinted a charge at one of the natives, and then stopped when the man thrust a spear toward its head.

After a few minutes of this torment, one of the natives, who was in position behind the lion, dashed out and grabbed the animal's tail.

The infuriated beast turned on him, and that was the end. The rest of the natives charged in and thrust home their spears and swords.

"Wow!" said Biff. "Those fellows sure take some chances."

"Well—" There was a note of sarcasm in Mathews' voice. "Now they are all respected *morans*—warriors."

"I suppose the one who grabbed the lion's tail gets the mane for a headdress?" asked Biff.

"That's about right, Biff."

"Some sport!" said Biff.

"Nothing but savages," remarked Henderson. "I told you, they're nothing but savages. And that is the way they ought to be treated."

"That's a matter of opinion," Uncle Warren said dryly.

"One thing for sure, though," said Biff, "the lion

doesn't have much of a chance in this game. It isn't fair."

"No, Biff," Mathews agreed, "but you have to remember that this is Africa. Over the years, this type of hunting has come to have a definite meaning to these tribesmen. Whether it is good or bad for them, according to our standards, is not for us to say."

"I suppose you're right, Mr. Mathews." Biff nodded. "We shouldn't judge what they do according to our own standards."

"And it does take courage to attack an enraged lion," added Uncle Warren.

"I noticed most of those men had scars and claw marks on their bodies," said Biff.

"That's right," said Mathews. "The lion usually loses in the end, but sometimes he does a lot of damage first. The hunt usually is a real test of courage."

Since it was getting late in the day, they started back to camp. When they had traveled for about fifteen minutes, Biff spotted the truck hurrying toward them.

"Mr. Mathews, looks like someone from camp is headed this way," he said.

Mathews stepped on the gas, and the Land Rover jerked forward to meet the oncoming truck. Mao was driving. He swung the car alongside the Land Rover.

"Bwana! Come quick to camp!" he yelled.

CHAPTER V

Monda

IN A FEW minutes, they were in sight of the camp. The crew that had been left behind was crowded around something lying on the ground.

Biff, his uncle, and Mathews hopped off the Land Rover almost before it stopped and rushed toward the group.

“What is it?” asked Biff. “What’s happened?” But no one answered him.

As they pushed their way through the group of porters, they saw a native boy lying on the ground.

He seemed to be about Biff’s size and age. He was dressed in a tattered shirt and trousers. His feet were covered with an old pair of cloth sneakers. His bronze

skin was blotched with dirt and scratches. He was as thin as a rail.

"Poor devil must have had a tough time on the plains," Warren Becker commented.

"Hope he's alive," said Biff.

Mathews had lifted the boy's head in his arm and had placed his ear against the boy's chest.

"He's alive, but he seems to be exhausted," the White Hunter reported.

Mathews carried the boy into a tent and placed him on a cot. He ordered the cook to hustle up some broth. When it came, Mathews fed it slowly to the stranger. Gradually, the native began to regain his strength.

Sometime later, the boy seemed to have recovered and actually was able to get off the cot and walk to the outside. The cook gave him a small portion of antelope meat which he devoured as if he hadn't eaten for days.

Mathews questioned him and learned that he could speak some English. Like the others, Biff was anxious to hear his story.

"What is your name?" asked Mathews.

"I no remember, Bwana," the boy replied.

"Where do you come from?"

"I am sorry, Bwana. I no remember."

Mathews scratched his head, puzzled. "What *do* you remember?" he demanded.

"I can only remember that I am wandering over the plains. It must have been for a long time. I am hungry. Then I see this camp and run to it for help. Then I no remember more."

"He must have passed out just as he got here," suggested Biff.

"Must be, sir. The next thing I remember, I wake up and find myself on a cot in a tent."

"Bet he's a victim of amnesia," suggested Uncle Warren.

"You mean a temporary loss of memory?" asked Biff.

"Yes," Mathews answered the question. "And your uncle might be right. I recall another young man having this happen to him years ago."

"What causes amnesia?" Biff asked.

"Pretty hard to tell. May be any one of many reasons."

"Yes," agreed Henderson. "And the memory can come back just as fast as it left," he added with what Biff thought was a disagreeable chuckle.

The native boy had looked at the faces of each one as he had spoken. Then he turned hesitantly toward Mathews.

"Can I stay with your safari for a while?" he asked. "Perhaps my memory will return. Then I will know who I am. I can help in many ways, perhaps? I can earn my way?"

"Well, I don't know." Mathews hesitated, eying the native boy thoughtfully.

"Why not?" Uncle Warren said. "We're short-handed anyway. A couple of the boys didn't show up, remember."

"I suppose it is all right," Mathews said. "We can drop him off in Mombasa when we get there in about eight days."

Mathews turned to Henderson. "How about you, Mr. Henderson? Do you have any objections? After all, you and Mr. Becker are financing this safari. It's up to you to decide."

Henderson raised his hand in a gesture of disinterest. "I see no objection. Of course, we may want to turn him over to the police, or the hospital, when we find out who he is."

Biff felt that the sarcastic remark was uncalled for, but he had begun to expect some such statement from the Englishman.

"Then it's agreed that he comes with us," Uncle Warren stated. The others nodded their heads.

"All right, now I have a suggestion," continued Mr. Becker. "He needs a name. Why don't we call him 'Monda'?"

"Monda—why Monda?" asked Biff.

"Well, we started the safari on Monday," Mr. Becker said, chuckling, "so Monda for short is very appropriate."

"Like Robinson Crusoe's man Friday, eh?" said Mathews.

"Something like that. Agreeable with you, young man?" Uncle Warren seemed to have taken to the boy.

"Monda—I shall be called Monda. That is good name, thank you." The native boy had a wide grin on his face.

Biff was delighted with the whole thing. Now he would have someone about his own age, who could speak some English, on the safari.

An hour later, everyone in camp had bedded down for the night. Monda was assigned to share a tent with Mao. They were planning to move camp early the next morning and would need all the rest they could get.

The sun had been up for less than twenty minutes when they finished breakfast. They packed the tents and equipment and soon were headed across the flat lands looking for another campsite where more game might be found.

Biff saw a cheetah for the first time. They came unexpectedly upon one of the graceful cats, which are known as perhaps the fastest animals in the world. It raced alongside the car for a few yards and then swerved off in the distance. Henderson was all for killing it, but was restrained by Mathews. Cheetahs were protected by law in this area, so no shots were

fired at it. The hunter also reminded Henderson that the hunting laws permitted no shooting from a car or within two hundred yards of a car. Henderson muttered something under his breath but soon subsided.

"He's turned out to be a real mean customer, hasn't he?" Biff whispered to his uncle.

"M-m," his uncle agreed. "Not a bit like the English sportsmen I've hunted with."

In a three-mile area, they passed the bleached bones of about twenty elephants.

"What a ruthless and wanton waste of wild life!" Uncle Warren exclaimed, frowning.

Mathews stopped the caravan for a few minutes to examine the bones.

The tusks were nowhere to be seen. Apparently they had been carelessly hacked from the carcasses, which had been left for the predatory animals, the vultures, and finally the ants to clean up.

"If this uncontrolled killing of elephants continues, there won't be any left in this area!" Mathews exploded. "The safari business will cease to exist in two or three years."

"Is that bad?" asked Henderson sarcastically. "It seems to me, it's already ceased to exist."

"It would be a very great shame," Warren Becker said quietly.

"Well," Henderson seemed to be weighing his words carefully, "all I can say is, someone is killing

those elephants, but *we're* not getting in any shooting! I think we should get out of this area and travel farther south. I paid good money to get in some big game hunting, and we're certainly not getting any here."

"Mr. Henderson," said Mathews, "I am sorry some people are illegally killing elephants here and probably scaring off other game, but this is still the best area to hunt."

"I disagree with you," Henderson returned bluntly. "I think we should go farther south."

"Farther south will bring us closer to the main highway between Nairobi and Mombasa. Animals have pretty much left that area," Mathews pointed out patiently.

"Why not circle farther north then?" Henderson asked. "At least we will be out of this section. We *know* there's nothing here to hunt."

"Farther north we will run into pretty dense jungle. Hard to get through with our cars. It might take several days before we saw any sign of big game, if any at all." The White Hunter obviously was controlling his temper with difficulty.

Uncle Warren stepped into the discussion at this point. "We have only a few days left," he said. "I agree with Mathews. We should follow the itinerary we have planned."

Biff looked at his uncle with admiration. He knew if they left the area, there probably would be no chance of coming upon the poachers or the men involved in the ivory smuggling trade, and they would have gathered no evidence for Interpol.

Supported by Warren Becker, Mathews decided that the safari would travel as planned. Henderson's face turned a dull red, but he did not press the argument.

Farther along, they spotted an elephant thrashing on the ground. They drove up to it cautiously.

"Why, it's just a little baby elephant!" Biff exclaimed.

"Yes, and it's nearly dead," his uncle observed. "I wonder how long ago this happened," he added thoughtfully.

The frightened creature seemed exhausted and was making noises which sounded like crying. Its front leg was partially severed. There was a wire attached to the leg bone in a slip-noose. The other end of the wire was firmly wrapped around the trunk of a heavy mahogany tree.

Mathews alighted from the Land Rover, rifle in hand.

"The poor little critter," he said. "There's really no hope for him."

Mercifully, Mathews fired a bullet into the brain of

the elephant and killed him instantly. As they grouped around the carcass, Mathews pointed to the wire that was encircling the leg.

"This is another one of the diabolical methods the poachers use to destroy elephants. A trap is made with a wire slip-noose. The wire is attached to a tree or some heavy object. When the animal gets caught, he can't get away. The more he struggles, the tighter the noose gets."

"Then he dies of starvation or infection," added Uncle Warren.

"Yes. Gangrene had already set in on this little fellow," Mathews said as he climbed back into the Land Wagon.

Biff was very much moved by the sight he had just witnessed. The seriousness of the terrible slaughter being caused by the ivory smugglers now had become a reality which disturbed his sense of fair play toward wild animals.

"What are we worrying about elephants for?" demanded Henderson. "What good are they except for their ivory and for hunting? I still think we should travel in another direction where we can do our own shooting."

"Mr. Henderson," Uncle Warren said firmly, "that matter has already been settled."

Although they passed a family of dog-faced baboons traveling across country, they saw little other

wild game. Finally Mathews gave an order to set up camp near a group of trees. Mao offered to drive the hunting car to fetch water from a water hole which was located several miles away.

Darkness descended quickly, and shortly after a dinner of canned beans and left-over meat, the camp bedded down for the night.

Usually a safari depended on hunting fresh meat for food each day. Without refrigeration, a large supply of uncooked food could not be carried. On occasions when it was impossible to secure meat, canned food, or whatever might have been left over that was edible, took its place on the menu.

Biff was exhausted. He took off his boots, flopped down on the cot, cupped his hands behind his head, and stared at the ceiling of the tent which he shared with his uncle. In a few minutes he was sound asleep. His uncle already had left the tent to have a pipeful of tobacco and a chat with Mathews before turning in.

About an hour later, Biff was suddenly awakened by his uncle's voice, low but insistent. Uncle Warren was calling his name.

"Biff! Biff! Don't move!"

Biff opened his eyes, startled. Then he stopped breathing. About ten inches in front of his face was the head of a snake. The rest of the reptile was coiled on the bed.

The snake's dark head swayed from side to side,

and in the light of the lantern its eyes seemed to be studying Biff's face, ready to strike.

Biff let out his breath slowly and cautiously. He felt a weight on his right leg just above his ankle. From



his prone position he could not see what was resting on his ankle. He feared that it might be another snake. But he had enough to worry about from the cobra.

Without moving a muscle, Biff followed the sway-



ing motion of the snake with his eyes. Then it seemed as if the swaying were beginning to speed up; as if the snake were making up its mind to act.

Biff's hands began to perspire. He lay as if paralyzed. This was one of the few times in his life when he felt utterly helpless.

CHAPTER VI

Swamp Snake

"BIFF, listen to me carefully." Uncle Warren was standing just inside the entrance of the tent. He was holding a revolver in his hand, and he spoke slowly and deliberately so that Biff would surely understand his instructions.

"When I count to three," Uncle Warren went on levelly, "I'm going to shoot at the cobra. Hope I'll hit it. I'll take two shots at it."

Biff resisted the temptation to nod his head.

"There's another snake, some kind of a viper, on your right leg. Now get this—" Warren Becker paused for a moment.

"Don't move a muscle. Your life may depend on this."

Biff felt his muscles tense up on him involuntarily. Becker continued his instructions, speaking slowly so he would not have to repeat them.

"After you hear the second shot, kick your right leg out. This may throw the viper off you before he decides to bite."

Biff stared at the moving head of the cobra less than twelve inches from his face. Then he felt the weight on his leg beginning to shift and knew that the other snake was deciding to do something. Why doesn't Uncle Warren shoot?—the question raced through his mind.

Warren Becker's voice reached him again. "I'm going to start counting now, Biff. Remember, move fast after the second shot."

Biff flexed his muscles ready to act.

"One—two—three." The loud, rapid double shots slashed the silence.

Instantly, Biff kicked out his right foot and sprang off the cot. As his feet hit the floor, Uncle Warren fired several more shots at the viper, which was now on the ground trying to find an opening under the tent wall.

The shots had hit home. The cobra lay motionless with a bullet hole in its head, and the viper writhed

in a death spasm and then stopped moving. The danger was past.

Biff began to shake.

"Gee, thanks, Uncle Warren," he exclaimed, squeezing his uncle's shoulder. His voice shook in spite of himself. "That was a close one! I'm sure glad you're a good shot."

"So am I, Biff," Warren Becker said, wiping beads of sweat from his forehead. "I had to take the chance, even if it meant hitting you. Let's have a look at these snakes."

They lifted the lantern so they could examine the snakes more closely. By this time Mathews and Henderson, hearing the shots, had rushed into the tent to find out what had happened.

Mathews moved the dead cobra with the tip of his rifle.

"You're lucky, Biff," he said. "This black-headed one is a spitting cobra. It kills its victims by spitting a blinding poison into the eyes. It can spray the venom with deadly accuracy at a distance of ten feet a dozen times in rapid succession."

"I'm glad he decided to wait before spraying me," said Biff in a very relieved tone. "After all, he was only ten inches away from my face. He couldn't have missed!"

The other snake was smaller and one of the most

colorful creatures Biff had ever seen. It was covered with brilliant blotches of blue, orange, yellow, dark red, and black. Its head was a deep blue. In a way, it was beautiful.

"This baby," said Mathews, "is a rhinoceros viper, one of the deadliest there is."

"Rhinoceros viper?"

"Yes, look here." Mathews pointed to two small, yellow hornlike projections above each nostril of the reptile. "These horns give the snake its name."

"It's pretty," Biff commented, "but somehow I just don't appreciate it!"

"I don't blame you. It's one of the most feared poisonous snakes. You really had a close call," Mathews told him soberly.

"I sure did. My teeth have only just stopped chattering," Biff agreed, grinning. "But I'm safe now, thanks to my uncle's good shooting."

Biff turned toward his uncle gratefully but was puzzled by the strange expression on the latter's face. He waited for an explanation.

"I'm not so sure about being safe, Biff," said Mr. Becker.

"What do you mean, Uncle Warren? Those snakes aren't going to start wiggling again, are they?" Biff demanded.

"Oh, no, they're dead all right. But how did they get here? That's what's bothering me."

"You have a point, Mr. Becker," said Mathews in a worried voice.

Henderson broke into the conversation. "Say, what's this mystery all about anyway?" he inquired impatiently.

"Well," said Mathews, "I can understand a cobra finding its way into the tent. There are probably a lot of them in the forests near here."

"But," interrupted Biff's uncle, "the rhinoceros viper lives in the swamps. And there are no swamps for miles around here."

"You mean someone must have carried that viper here from a distance?" Biff asked.

"I don't know," his uncle said, "but there should be some explanation."

"Oh, come now," said Henderson. "Why try to make a big deal out of this? One of the boys went for water, didn't he?"

"Yes, Mao did last night. Why?" asked the White Hunter.

"Well, probably the viper got into the truck, then dropped off when the truck returned to camp and somehow found its way into this tent." Henderson seemed pleased with his apparently logical explanation.

"That *could* be the explanation," agreed Mathews. "Let's ask Mao where he went and whether he noticed anything unusual."

On questioning Mao, they learned that the water

hole he had visited was surrounded by a swamp, but Mao denied having seen anything unusual on the trip.

They finally all agreed that perhaps Henderson's theory was plausible, so they turned in for the night. Biff had an uneasy feeling as he once more lay down on his cot, but he felt reassured by the presence of his uncle, who was on the cot next to his.

After a very fitful sleep, Biff woke up early in the morning. His uncle was still asleep. The boy tried to lie quietly on the cot, but was too restless to remain there. He scanned the dirt floor carefully, then quietly slid out of his cot. Close to his feet, he noticed a burlap bag near the tent wall.

He grabbed his uncle's rifle and began to poke the bag with the barrel. The bag was empty.

"What are you doing, Biff?" Uncle Warren's sleepy voice reached him.

"Oh, morning, Uncle Warren. Look what I just found here."

"What is it?" Warren Becker was on his feet now, and joined Biff.

"Looks like a burlap bag. It wasn't here when I turned in last night. I remember I placed my boots here and flopped on the bed."

"You mean before we found the snakes?" Uncle Warren asked.

"Yes, I'm sure the bag was not here then," Biff declared.

The two got down on their knees to examine the ground for any marks that might give them a clue.

"Look here, Uncle Warren," said Biff. "Streaks in the dirt extending under the tent wall."

"Looks like someone deliberately pushed the bag under the tent wall," said his uncle. "And there was something in the bag that was heavy enough to make creases in the dirt."

"The snakes?"

"That's what I think, Biff. Someone pushed that burlap sack, with the snakes inside, under the canvas and into the tent!"

"You mean someone on the safari actually tried to kill us with the snakes?"

"This isn't the first time someone has tried to hurt us, is it, Biff?"

"Why, no! There were those two cutthroats at the airport who tried to get me to go with them. Then there was that close call in Nairobi when the car almost ran us down."

"This is all adding up to something, Biff," remarked Uncle Warren, scratching his head. "I don't know what it is, but I don't like it."

Biff and his uncle dressed in silence. Each was weighing the situation in his mind.

"I think we should have another talk with Mao, don't you, Biff?" Uncle Warren said finally.

"I sure think so," Biff agreed. "He must know more

about this than he admitted last night. Anyway, we can question him."

They decided not to say anything to Mathews about their suspicions. They were not sure where he stood, and they wanted to do a little investigation of their own first.

When they asked for Mao, they were informed that the native was no longer in camp. In fact, he had taken his few belongings and had left the safari before dawn!

CHAPTER VII

Treacherous Water

THE fact that Mao had skipped camp seemed to confirm Biff and his uncle's suspicions that he knew more than he had admitted. There was some diabolical scheme at work which appeared to have injury or death for Biff and Warren Becker as its main objective. Surely this could only be tied up with their mission for Interpol?

The two rushed to Mathews' tent. The White Hunter listened calmly to the report that Mao had left camp.

"This is not surprising," said Mathews with what Biff thought was an annoying lack of concern. "Safari

boys often desert camp, and Mao has been restless since the day we left."

"But what about the burlap sack?" Warren Becker asked, irritated at the Hunter's attitude. "Surely you must admit that the sack, with the snakes inside, *could* have been pushed under the tent wall."

"I am sorry, Mr. Becker, but I think that is a fantastic theory. There are sacks just like that one right here in camp."

"Yes, but how did it get into our tent?" Biff demanded.

"It might have been dropped there earlier by one of the boys when they set up the tent," Mathews suggested.

Biff and his uncle exchanged glances of disbelief.

Mathews continued. "There is nothing we can do about it without evidence," he pointed out. "We have no proof whatever that Mao or anyone else in camp planted the snakes in your tent."

Mathews' argument did not satisfy either Biff or his uncle, but they realized there was little to gain from continuing the discussion.

"We'll find proof, somehow," Uncle Warren said curtly as they left the tent.

Biff had never seen his uncle so angry.

"I wonder why Mr. Mathews acted so stubborn about this?" the boy asked.

"The man is either very naive, or he has some ul-

terior purpose in not wanting to get at the truth," said Warren Becker.

"Perhaps we *are* jumping to conclusions, Uncle Warren," Biff ventured. "Maybe the snakes *did* crawl in on their own."

"Maybe, Biff, but I'm not convinced."

"Neither am I."

"Well, let's keep alert and not let this spoil our safari. After all, we did come for some sport."

"What about Interpol?" Biff inquired.

"Sh!" his uncle cautioned. After making certain that no one was in hearing distance, he added, "Of course, that is our main mission. But we better not mention it."

"OK, Uncle Warren."

After a hurried breakfast of cornmeal mush, some strips of fried duiker antelope which Mathews had killed the evening before, and a mug of weak tea, the Hunter announced the plans for the day.

"We'll make up two search parties and go in different directions," he explained. "Let's try to find where the game is located."

"Is this a good idea?" asked Mr. Henderson. "After all, I'm not an experienced hunter, you know."

"I plan for you to go with me, Mr. Henderson," said Mathews, noting the concern in the man's question.

"Oh, that's satisfactory then."

"Mr. Becker," continued Mathews, "will you take charge of the other group? Take Biff and Monda, and one of the native crew, perhaps Watongi, with you."

"I'll be glad to," said Becker. "When do we report back?"

"Let's plan a late afternoon lunch here at camp," Mathews suggested. "If either party finds signs of ample game, we'll all move out together for an early morning hunt tomorrow."

Biff climbed into the Land Rover and sat next to his uncle, who was to drive. Monda and Watongi hopped in the rear of the station wagon.

Watongi was a small man of very slight build. His hair was black. His arms and legs extended out of his clothes like thin black sticks. His teeth, sharpened to a point and widely spaced, were a shiny white enamel when he smiled, which was often.

"It sure is going to be hot today," remarked Biff, wiping the perspiration that had begun to form around his head under the sweat band of his hat.

"Sun very hot now," said Monda. "Later, maybe too hot."

The car traveled for almost an hour, raising a cloud of fine dust in its wake as it bounced over the rough, scrub brush-studded plain.

They spotted two elephants with their large ears flopping like sails. Even though they were a good thirty yards away, they could hear the characteristic

rumblings which came from the stomachs of the beasts. The near-sighted brutes apparently couldn't distinguish the car at that distance since they moved about undisturbed, foraging for food.

Watongi yelled, "*Fisi! Fisi!*" as a small pack of hyenas suddenly sprang up from the grass and dashed off.

Later, Biff pointed to a couple of giraffes that ambled away in the distance. "What are they called?" he asked.

Watongi replied, "*Twiga.*"

Farther on they spotted a wart hog, an ugly creature, that the native said was a *bango*, and a slinky jackal that he called a *kala*.

However, they saw no sign of any real game animal, such as the wildebeest, impala, reedbuck, gazelle, klipspringer, lion, or leopard.

As they started up a long grassy hill, the car began to buck.

"Something's wrong here," said Mr. Becker. He slid the hand spark up and down several times and pressed down on the gas pedal. The car made a sudden lunge forward and stalled.

"Well!" he exclaimed in disgust.

"What's wrong, Uncle Warren?"

"Don't know, Biff. I'll take a look under the hood."

Mr. Becker examined the motor, then tried to start the car without success; adjusted a couple of small

screws; tried to start it again; and then began to remove the cushions off the front seat.

"Hope there are some tools here," he said.

He found a jack, a pair of pliers, and a screwdriver tangled up in a hank of rope and some rags.

"These will have to do," he remarked.

"What do you think the trouble is, Uncle Warren?"

"I think I'll have to clean out the carburetor and probably blow out the gas line. Dust must have gotten into it and plugged the feed line."

"Can I help?"

"Don't think so, Biff. Thanks."

"It sure is hot here in the sun, Uncle Warren," said Biff. "How long will it take?"

"Oh, maybe an hour with these tools," replied Mr. Becker.

He scanned the horizon and pointed to a group of trees silhouetted against the sky just over the top of the hill.

"Why don't you and Monda and Watongi walk over to those trees and rest in the shade while I get this fixed?" he suggested. "No need for us all to fry."

"Distance is deceptive on the plains, Uncle Warren. How far away do you think those trees are?"

"A mile or so. There may even be a water hole on the other side of the hill. You can cool off." Mr. Becker began to work on the car, then raised his head

again. "I'll drive by and pick you up when I'm finished."

In the hot sun, the uphill walk was very tiring. But when they reached the top, Biff was happy to note that his uncle's guess was correct. A short way down on the other side of the hill was a small lake of shallow water about a hundred feet in diameter. The surface of the water rippled gently like molten copper in the bright sunlight.

Coarse grass filled the area from the edge of the water to the bushes and trees which stood back about fifty feet. The lake was nestled in a little valley created by a group of hills and slopes.

"Boy, let's cool off," said Biff, as he walked to the edge of the lake, scooped up some water, and soaked his face and neck. The others did the same.

Refreshed, Biff and Monda sat down on the ground in the shade with their backs resting against the trunk of a tree.

"Sure hope Uncle Warren can get that car fixed soon," said Biff.

"Bwana seem to know well what he doing," said Monda.

"Guess so," remarked Biff. "But he didn't have many tools."

"He be fine."

"Sure. Say, by the way, where is Watongi?"

"Him look around. Make sure no big animal here."

"Good. I hope he doesn't find any. I'm tired. We can all use a rest."

Biff's eyes burned from the glare of the bright sun. He rubbed them gently and kept his eyelids clamped tightly for a few minutes.

Suddenly a wild scream ripped the peaceful silence. Watongi shot out from behind some bushes waving his arms wildly. He was enveloped in a dark cloud of angry mosquitos, gnats, and other insects which were dive-bombing him, getting into his nostrils, ears, and even his mouth.

The desperate little man was almost in panic. He ran straight for the water and soon was about 20 feet out from the shore of the lake, standing in water up to the middle of his shin bones. He leaned down and began to splash water on himself to chase the bugs away.

Then Watongi let out a shriek and began to shake all over.

"What's wrong?" shouted Biff.

"Him in quicksand. Cannot move feet!" exclaimed Monda.

CHAPTER VIII

Close Call

"MY GOSH, what'll we do?" gasped Biff. He felt a cold sweat come over him.

"I go fast. Get rope," shouted Monda, starting up the hill.

Biff looked at Watongi struggling to get his feet out of the quicksand. The water now was almost up to his knees.

Biff yelled to the panic-stricken man. "Watongi, lie back. Spread your arms wide. And for heaven's sake, stop struggling!"

Biff realized it would take a lot of courage to do this, but he knew the only chance Watongi had was to spread himself over as large a surface as possible.

Used to following orders, Watongi threw himself backward, splashing up a blanket of water around him as he landed.

"Don't move, Watongi," shouted Biff. "Monda will be back soon with a rope."

Biff felt helpless. He had read about quicksand. It is caused by run-off water that seeps underground and then forces its way up again through firm soil. This makes the sand loose so that each grain is suspended free. The sand has no traction because the water pressure exactly balances the weight of the sand.

Biff was not aware of the great tension which was building up in Watongi's mind. Being of slight build, the native had little buoyancy. As his hips and feet began to sink lower, he could restrain himself no longer. He began to twist and tried to force his hips up by pushing down on his hands, which, of course, was exactly the wrong thing to do.

"Don't, Watongi!" shouted Biff. "You'll sink for sure."

The man was soon exhausted. He managed to lift one hand out of the sand, but his other hand was imprisoned under the water.

Biff couldn't see how far Monda had gone, since the latter was now over the other side of the hill. But with Watongi in a near-hysterical condition, Biff knew he could not wait for Monda to get back with the rope. It would be too late.

"Don't move, Watongi. I'll think of something," he yelled, trying to keep the man as calm as possible.

Biff spotted a couple of tree saplings. With his knife, he hastily cut them down and trimmed them so he had two poles about four inches thick and ten to twelve feet long.

"Watongi, I'm going to throw one of these poles near you, but don't move too much to grab it. Do you hear me?"

Watongi did not reply. He lay stiff with his feet, part of his hips, and one hand stuck in the treacherous sand. The man was paralyzed with fear.

The pole landed a short distance from Watongi.

Biff shouted again. "Do you hear me, Watongi?"

There was no sign from the helpless man.

"I'm coming in after you, Watongi," exclaimed Biff. "Just don't move!"

Biff pushed the other pole out into the water toward the man and then lay down on the bank so that the pole was at a right angle to his hips.

Taking a deep breath to fill his lungs, he slowly rolled out into the water on top of the pole. He made one complete roll and rested with his arms outstretched. His heels began to sink. Carefully, he eased them up out of the sand.

Then he took another deep breath, and cautiously made a second complete roll and stopped to rest. The third roll brought him to the end of the pole, which

supported his hips. He was now about ten feet from the man.

"Watongi," he called calmly, "I'm right here. Are you all right?"

The little dark man turned his head slowly toward Biff. His eyes opened wide, and his white teeth glistened as he smiled at the unexpected nearness of assistance. He tried to lift himself.

"Lie still, Watongi," scolded Biff. "I'm going to push this other pole under you. Don't try to help unless I tell you."

Biff grasped the end of the floating pole and slowly steered the other end under the small of Watongi's back.

"Try to lift your stomach up a little, if you can," he ordered.

With great effort, Watongi was able to do as he was ordered. Biff gave the pole a push and it finally slid under the man.

Pushing down on the pole with his free hand, Watongi had now enough leverage to ease his other hand out of the grip of the sand.

"Very good, Watongi, very good!" encouraged Biff. "Now work the pole slowly under your hips—but slowly!"

This took a few minutes, but panic had left Watongi. He seemed now to have complete confidence in Biff.

"Just rest there until Monda gets back with the rope," said Biff.

Slowly, Biff began to work his way back to the shore. He rolled and rested, rolled and rested. The fourth turn brought him on to the firm ground. He was exhausted. He looked out toward Watongi, who was now spread-eagled in the water with the pole under his hips.

"Atta boy, Watongi," he said between breaths. "It won't be long now."

The native's face was shaped in a grateful grin.

Several minutes later, Monda appeared over the top of the hill with the coil of rope slung over his shoulder. He obviously had run all the way.

"Got rope—got rope," he shouted, working hard to catch his breath.

"You sure are a welcome sight, Monda," said Biff.

"Bwana Becker coming," said Monda. "Him not run so fast."

Monda picked up a chunk of wood, tied it to the end of the rope, and then heaved it to Watongi.

"Take the wood off, and tie the rope around your wrist," shouted Biff.

The man did as he was told.

"Good! Now start working your legs up out of the sand slowly."

Watongi followed instructions to the letter. This took several minutes. Then, with Biff and Monda

pulling on the rope, he was dragged, inch by inch, toward the edge of the water. Mr. Becker arrived and joined in pulling the helpless man to firm ground. Almost an hour had passed from the time Biff had pushed the pole under Watongi.

"You boys did some quick thinking," said Mr. Becker. "That was an awful risk you took, Biff."

"Oh, I guess Watongi would have done the same for me," said Biff, somewhat embarrassed at his uncle's praise.

"I'm sure he would," continued Mr. Becker. "Let's get back to the car. Another ten minutes' work, and I'll have it going again. Then we better go right back to camp."

It was in the middle of the afternoon when they finally pulled up to the tents of the camp. Mathews and Mr. Henderson had already returned. They hadn't spotted any worthwhile game either, and the Englishman was grumbling about it.

The next morning, they set up camp some twenty miles farther east. Hunting was much better in this new location. During the next couple of days, Mr. Becker bagged a full-grown male leopard and a large wildebeest. Mr. Henderson was pleased with the two bushbucks he killed. Biff had taken a few half-hearted shots at some sand grouse and several other birds, but he had aimed high so he would miss. Somehow

he did not like the idea of killing just for the sport of it.

After lunch on the second afternoon, Biff and Monda borrowed the Land Rover and drove over the plains to try to spot some more game for the others to hunt.

The two boys had become fairly good friends. Biff welcomed the chance to spend some time with Monda, because he hoped to help the native boy recall more about himself.

They traveled about five miles and stopped at a water hole which was surrounded by a large area of bush and trees.

"Maybe there will be tracks near water, Biff," suggested Monda.

"OK, Monda. There probably aren't any big animals around here this early in the day, but spoors will tell us whether any animals come here to drink at night."

The two boys alighted from the car and moved in opposite directions looking for signs of large game. The wooded area proved to be much larger than Biff had imagined. In a short time he had completely lost sight of Monda.

A splashing of water attracted Biff's attention. He moved to a position behind some brush and saw that a huge water buffalo was wading in the soft mud of the

water hole. He estimated that the monster must weigh over a ton.

Not wanting to attract the buffalo's attention, Biff made a wide sweep away from the water. Suddenly he came upon a buffalo calf that had been dozing.

"Well, what have we here?" said Biff as he stopped to study the animal. He had never seen a baby buffalo at such close range.

The animal let out a bleat of fear. In a few moments there came the sound of loud thrashing behind the calf. The big buffalo had plunged out of the water when it heard the calf's cry, and now was headed for Biff. The huge beast blasted out a loud bellow.

"Wow!" Biff gasped, when he saw the tremendous horned head of the monster not more than twenty feet away. The boy started to run as fast as his long legs could pump.

He glanced back once and realized that the big brute was gaining on him. He felt himself getting winded and knew that the powerful buffalo could outlast him.

As Biff reached a mahogany tree, he leaped for the lowest branches and pulled himself up into the tree as high as he could go.

He was almost shaken loose when the buffalo rammed the trunk. The brute charged it several times. Each time the tree was hit, Biff was sure it would be uprooted or that he would be shaken to the ground.

"Hey, cut that out!" he yelled.

The enraged animal below him snorted defiantly. But after a few more attempts to uproot the tree, the stubborn buffalo decided to wait Biff out. It flopped its massive body under the tree and looked up menacingly at the helpless Biff, who was hugging the trunk ten feet above.

"Hey, Monda! Where are you?" Biff called as loudly as he could for several minutes. There was no answer. Then he quit yelling, because he knew Monda would come looking for him sooner or later. He waited quietly, straddling two limbs.

Fifteen long minutes passed. Biff began to worry. He snapped off some large twigs from the tree and pelted them down on the enemy below, but these did not seem to bother the buffalo at all. The animal was in no hurry to leave.

Although the situation had been humorous at first, it now began to take on a serious aspect. Perhaps Monda had had another lapse of memory and had strayed away. Or maybe there *was* a plot to hurt Biff or his uncle, and Monda was part of the plot. But Biff refused to accept this idea. After all, Monda could not have known that Biff would encounter the buffalo and its calf.

"It's beginning to get dark," said Biff to himself. "Sure hope Monda comes soon."

Night, Biff knew, falls suddenly on the plains. If it

got dark before Monda found him, Biff would have to spend the night in the tree or else venture alone on the plain without any firearms for protection. In either case, he would be an easy prey for some hungry leopard.

Just as the daylight began to fade, Biff heard the klaxon of the Land Rover. It was the most welcome sound he had heard in a long time.

"Over here, Monda!" he yelled and waved his arm wildly.

"Good old Monda! I'm sure glad he's here," said Biff to himself, although persuading the buffalo to leave was not going to be an easy matter.

Then from his high perch, he witnessed a fine example of human ingenuity on the part of Monda. As the car came closer, the brute rose to its feet and stood facing the mechanical adversary approaching. When the Land Rover was about twenty feet in front of the animal, Monda blew the klaxon vigorously and then veered the car toward one side, hoping the buffalo would follow it.

But the buffalo was either confused or stubborn. It remained standing where it was and merely turned its head to watch the receding car.

Monda doubled back and crossed in front of the animal several times, coming closer and closer on each pass. But the buffalo did not fall for the ruse.

Up in the tree, Biff yelled encouragement and



The buffalo let out a maddened bellow and charged

showered more twigs on the buffalo. But it was useless. The beast stood his ground.

Then Monda decided to try a new attack. He swung the car around and began to back slowly, directly toward the huge monster. He was ready to apply the brakes, shift into forward, and shoot ahead as soon as the animal started after him.

The car backed up slowly, coming closer and closer to the head of the animal. Biff held his breath as he watched this dangerous maneuver.

The car backed up to within five feet of the buffalo. Monda put his foot on the clutch, throwing the car out of gear, then pushed the accelerator down to the floor board. He raced the motor at top speed. A blast of nauseous exhaust gas exploded in the face of the buffalo. That did it!

The animal let out a maddened bellow and charged the rear of the car. But Monda was ready. He had engaged the clutch, and the car shot forward just ahead of the animal. Then Monda swerved the car and started to move in another direction. The buffalo turned with it and galloped after the Land Rover. Soon the car and the buffalo were racing a hundred yards away.

By this time it had grown quite dark. Monda had switched on his lights.

Biff watched the two streaks of light in the front and the red taillight in the rear moving away in the

distance across the plain. He knew the buffalo was right behind the Land Rover since the red light disappeared every now and then as the animal got between it and Biff's line of vision.

"Nice going, Monda," said Biff to himself. He was fascinated with the race. Then he noticed that the car was swinging in a wide circle and was headed back toward him. The buffalo was tiring, and had begun to lose ground.

Biff scampered down from the tree and hopped in the car just as it came alongside him. By this time, the exhausted buffalo was over fifty yards behind the Land Rover.

"That was pretty smart, Monda, and brave, too!" Biff exclaimed, as he settled in the seat beside the native boy. "Thanks!"

"Oh, those buffaloes not smart!" Monda shrugged.

"This one wasn't so dumb. He was stubborn and determined," said Biff. "If the car had stalled when you shot away from him, you might have been killed."

"I didn't worry about that."

"Well, thanks anyway, Monda. You really saved my life." Biff felt a new respect for his quick-thinking friend.

On the way back to camp, the two boys chatted about their future. Biff said he hoped to go to Notre Dame University when he graduated from high school, and asked Monda if he had any plans.

"I don't know, Biff," Monda replied slowly. "I do remember that I wanted to go to a college in Nairobi once."

"You mean the Royal Technical College?" Biff asked. "I saw that when we were in Nairobi."

"Royal Technical College. Yes, I think that's it," said Monda.

"Where did you learn to speak English?" asked Biff. "You must have attended school somewhere."

"I must have, but I cannot remember." Monda shook his head.

Biff asked more questions, but Monda always changed the subject or said he could not remember when it came to information about his background. Biff brought the conversation back to college.

"I can never go to college, Biff," said Monda. "It costs money, and I have no money at all."

Biff felt he knew Monda a great deal better after their discussion on the ride back to camp, although many points about his background were still a mystery. There seemed to have developed between them a closer feeling of friendship and mutual respect.

The next morning Biff was up early. He was looking forward to another adventurous day with his friend. But he could not find him. Then he learned something from one of the porters which disturbed him very much.

"Monda—him go 'way in night."

CHAPTER IX

Spotted Fury

MONDA'S disappearance puzzled Biff and worried him. Perhaps his friend had had another seizure of amnesia and was now wandering on the plain, lost and bewildered.

At breakfast, Biff spoke of Monda.

"Won't you please try to find him, Mr. Mathews?" he asked.

"I am sorry, Biff. He is neither a client nor a hired hand. I have no responsibility for Monda," replied the Hunter.

"I should think *not*," said Henderson. "I paid a lot of money to go on this safari. We haven't done any

hunting worth mentioning. And we have only four days left."

"But Monda is unarmed. What if he is attacked by a couple of lions or a hungry leopard?" Biff asked earnestly.

"That's his lookout, young man," said Henderson.

Biff turned toward his uncle for help.

"I guess there is little we can do, Biff," said Uncle Warren. "Maybe we will run into him when we start moving."

Biff knew it was useless to press the point further. He might have expected Henderson's selfish attitude. But Mathews' unwillingness to be concerned about the safety of Monda puzzled him somewhat. And he didn't quite understand his uncle's remarks, but assumed that Uncle Warren had a purpose in not pressing for a search.

The tents and equipment had already been packed, and the party was about to leave when Monda himself appeared in the distance.

"There's Monda now!" exclaimed Biff, relieved to see his friend return.

Monda explained that he did not remember leaving the camp.

"Well, we cannot spare the time to try to look for you, Monda," explained Mathews. "If you wander off again and get lost, it will be your own responsibility. Do you understand?"

"Yes," said Monda. "I try not to go away again."

Biff and his uncle sat in the rear of the Land Rover, which was being driven by one of the boys. Mathews drove the truck with most of the native crew resting on the tentage in the back. Henderson and Monda rode in the hunting car driven by another native driver.

After several miles of silence, Biff turned to his uncle.

"Do you think Monda was telling the truth about wandering off, Uncle Warren?"

"Sounded pretty phony to me, Biff."

"What do you make of it?"

"Not sure yet, Biff. I've been trying to figure it out."

"Do you think Monda may have left camp for a definite purpose?" Biff asked.

"You mean perhaps to meet someone?"

"That's just what I do mean, Uncle Warren," said Biff. "You don't suppose he's in league with the smuggling ring, the way Mao must have been?"

Becker scratched his head as he usually did when he was thinking. "Interesting theory."

"How can we be sure?"

"Don't know, Biff. Let's keep the idea in mind and observe closely." Warren Becker scratched his head again. "What do you suppose those two are talking about?"

Biff looked toward the hunting car. Henderson and Monda seemed to be absorbed in conversation.

"I wonder," said Biff, and he kept wondering until they stopped for lunch.

Henderson faced Mathews and insisted that they travel farther south as the Englishman had suggested several days before. He said Monda had reported that one of the native tribes in the area was attacking white men.

"Why would they want to do that?" asked Mathews.

"Well, I suppose one of them was arrested, and this is a way for the natives to free him."

"I'll think about it," said Mathews. He walked toward the truck where Monda and some of the crew were securing the tents and questioned Monda. The boy said he had mentioned hearing such a report some time ago, but he did not know which area was involved. It soon became obvious that Henderson had exaggerated some casual remark of Monda's.

As they were about to leave, Mathews announced that they would continue on the route he had planned originally.

"You can't do this!" roared Henderson. "You are endangering the lives of all of us."

"Mr. Henderson," said Mathews, obviously angered at the charge, "I am directing this safari and I accept

all the responsibility. We are proceeding as I direct. If you wish to leave, I will have one of the boys drive you back to Nairobi."

Henderson pouted. "All right! All right! I just hope you know what you are doing," he grumbled.

"Wow!" whispered Biff to his uncle. "Mr. Mathews is sure sore."

"He should be. If he goes against his own better judgment on a flimsy story of danger, he would hurt his prestige as a competent professional White Hunter," explained Becker.

"I suppose there is always some danger on a safari," added Biff.

"Of course. And that's the risk people take when they sign up to go on a safari. That's part of the excitement."

Biff had to admit to himself the logic of his uncle's statement.

The bitterness which had developed between Mathews and Henderson seemed to have affected the mood of everyone on the safari. Even the native cooks, who were generally joking and jovial, had become serious and unsmiling.

By the next day, the camp seemed to have become divided into two factions. Arguments sprang up over unimportant matters. Biff and his uncle tried to stay out of the disagreements but usually found themselves

siding with Mathews. Henderson, sometimes supported by Monda, opposed Mathews on nearly all suggestions, almost as if he wanted to stir up trouble.

Monda somehow had gained the respect of the native crew and seemed to hold a position of leadership among some of them.

Breakfast was a sullen affair that morning. Henderson kept complaining again and again about the poor hunting. Mathews was annoyed at the Englishman's attitude and even more disturbed about the low morale in the camp.

"I think we should split up into search parties this morning," said the Hunter. "Maybe we can locate some game."

Anxious to ease the tension, Biff spoke up to keep the conversation going on an impersonal basis. "Where do you think the game has gone, Mr. Mathews?" he asked.

"Don't know, Biff." Mathews gave a shrug of resignation. "But I have an idea of why the animals may have left this area."

"Well, that *is* something!" exclaimed Henderson, sarcastically.

"Go ahead, Mr. Mathews," broke in Biff's uncle.

The Hunter threw an angry glance at Henderson and continued to speak.

"Maybe some large, dangerous animal has been over-active in this territory. Quite often the less aggressive

animals sense the presence of a killer and move to another area!"

"A dangerous animal like a lion?" asked Biff.

"I doubt if a lion would cause this, Biff," explained Mathews. "Lions are temperamental and moody, and they're greatly affected by the weather."

"In what way?"

"Well," continued Mathews, "in the rainy season, the lion is usually nervous and very energetic. He probably kills more often during that period. The other animals avoid him as much as they can at that time of the year."

"I suppose in the dry season, the lion is just the opposite?"

"That's right, Biff. When it's hot and dry, he's apt to be lazy and indifferent. Makes a kill only when he's really hungry."

"What could be frightening the animals then?" asked Biff.

"Perhaps a leopard?" broke in Uncle Warren.

"That's probably right, Mr. Becker," Mathews said. "The leopard is cunning and seems always to be looking for a kill, even if he isn't hungry. A leopard, in a nasty mood, might kill everything that crossed his path."

"Very interesting," said Henderson. "But when do we start on the search parties? Maybe we'll bag us a leopard."

"A couple of the boys have gone for water," said Mathews, ignoring the Englishman's sarcasm. "We'll leave as soon as they get back."

A few minutes later, Watongi and another native, with water sacks draped over their shoulders, emerged from the bushes. Watongi had a long, shiny spear in his hand and a big grin on his face.

"Where in the world did you get that Masai spear?" asked Mathews.

"Me find," replied the native, waving the weapon proudly over his head so all could see it. The long, highly polished blade glistened in the sunlight.

"Boy, that's a dandy," said Biff, running his fingers over the smooth hardwood handle and cautiously thumbing the razor-sharp edges and point.

"Me find in grass," said Watongi. "Me keep?"

"You can keep it, Watongi," agreed the White Hunter, amused at the excitement of the little native, "unless the owner shows up. I don't think the Masai warriors like to lose their spears."

"Oh, the Masai can make another one easily," remarked Biff's uncle, much to Watongi's relief.

"Me take on hunt, Bwana?" Watongi wasn't going to let the prize out of his hands.

"We're leaving soon, Watongi. You can take the spear along if you wish."

"Thank you, Bwana, thank you."

"You're welcome," said Mathews.

In less than thirty minutes, the Land Rover and the hunting car were ready to leave. Mr. Becker, driving the Rover, was accompanied by Biff, Monda, and Watongi, who kept a firm grip on the spear.

Mathews drove the hunting car, which contained Henderson and three of the native boys. "By the way, Biff," asked Mr. Becker, "are you taking your .22 rifle? We might see some birds."

"Yes, Uncle Warren. It's back there in the gun rack with your Winchester and one of those heavy double-barreled rifles."

"Good! Let's hope we'll have some luck this morning."

The Land Rover bounced along for almost an hour, plowing its way through a wilderness of tough, tall, yellow grass.

"Anything could be hiding in that grass," remarked Biff.

"You're right. But I think I'll head for those woods and take a look inside." Mr. Becker pointed to a bush area about a half mile away. "Maybe some deer or other game are hiding in the bush for safety."

"Would it be safer in the woods than out on the open plain?" asked Biff.

"I don't know, but I should think so," said Mr. Becker. "What do you think, Monda?"

"Me believe that so, Mr. Becker," replied the boy. "If leopard here in big grass, very bad for other animals. Leopard sneak through grass very easy."

"Well," said Biff, "if any animals are in this area, they're probably hiding in the woods. There certainly doesn't seem to be any game out here on the plains."

"We'll soon find out, Biff," said Mr. Becker, as he brought the Land Rover to a stop at the edge of the tree line, reached back for his rifle, and hopped out of the car.

"Monda and I will go into the woods and take a look," he continued. "You and Watongi stay out here with the car. Maybe you'll get a shot at a couple of birds. We'll try to flush some out of the trees."

"OK, Uncle Warren," said Biff.

With the hot sun beating down on the roof of the Land Rover, the heat in the car became unbearable.

"We might as well get out, Watongi," suggested Biff. "We'll bake in here."

The two hopped down from the car into the high grass. Biff held his rifle, and Watongi balanced the spear in his hand.

True to Mr. Becker's predictions, several button-quails and a guinea-fowl darted out of the trees, flew a half circle, and darted back into the woods at another point.

"Maybe I can get a shot or two at those birds," remarked Biff, moving off a distance from the car. He

took a standing position facing the woods so he could spot a bird as soon as it might appear. He held the rifle to his shoulder ready for action.

A large quail plunged out of the trees about fifteen feet up from the ground. Biff took quick aim ahead of the bird and fired. Apparently he missed.

Then he heard a low, throaty rumble ending in a cough, in the grass just behind him. He turned quickly and found himself facing a huge tawny head, spotted with black rosette blotches. Two large bloodshot eyes gleamed wickedly at him.

Biff stood in frozen suspense. One word ran through his mind—"Leopard!"

CHAPTER X

Fang and Claw

THE big cat's sinuous body was crouched in the grass less than twenty feet away from him. The next instant, the leopard was in the air, its claw-tipped front legs aimed at Biff's face.

Instinctively, Biff swung his rifle like a baseball bat. It smashed a hard blow at the side of the leopard's head, knocking the big cat off the course of its leap. The animal hit the ground with a heavy thump. But the blow had also torn the rifle out of Biff's hands and jarred him to the ground.

Helpless, Biff watched the leopard quickly regain its feet and turn toward him. White saliva dripped from its mouth.

"Help! Help!" yelled Biff.

A roar rumbled from the animal's throat.

Suddenly, Watongi appeared, holding the spear with both hands. With a display of courage that amazed Biff, the little native rushed toward the leopard. He kicked a clump of dirt in the animal's face to divert its attention away from Biff.

"Watch out, Watongi!" shouted Biff.

The leopard now had its head turned full toward the native. It seemed to be lashing itself into a rage. Its head wagged back and forth, and its breath came in dry, husky gasps.

Watongi, body tilted forward, poised with the spear pointed at the leopard's head.

Biff knew the only hope was to get his uncle back as quickly as possible.

"Watongi, I'm going to run to the car and blow the horn. My uncle will know we're in trouble and will come fast. Be careful!"

The small native nodded his head once, but kept his eyes glued on the face of the angry leopard, which was only about a foot away from the point of the spear.

"I'll have to circle around him to get to the car, Watongi," yelled Biff. "Keep him busy!"

Attracted by Biff's sudden movement, however, the leopard suddenly turned toward him. Watongi realized that Biff would have no chance if the big cat decided to take after him.

The native shouted "Auk!" and jabbed the point of the spear at the leopard's head, like a boxer feinting with a left hook.

The leopard tore at the sharp blade with an angry sweep of its huge paw.

Watongi pulled back the spear, and then, like a one-two punch of a boxer, drove the spear again just as the leopard lunged forward. The spear met the shock of the charge and the point buried itself in the left shoulder of the leopard.

By this time, Biff had reached the car. He pressed down hard on the horn. The loud "aa-hoo-aa" of its sound sliced the eerie silence a dozen times.

Biff looked toward Watongi. The native seemed like a small boy in front of the huge body of the leopard. The cat was a snarling, clawing ball of fury, its front paws lashing at the spear that was paining it in the shoulder. Watongi, holding the long handle of the weapon, was pressing to push the point of the spear deeper into the enraged animal's body.

Biff knew he had to help Watongi somehow, and immediately. A wounded animal is the most dangerous creature in the world. By the time Uncle Warren arrived, it might be too late. Biff swung around on the car seat and spotted the heavy double barreled rifle in the rack. It was loaded!

Without stopping to think about the danger, Biff grabbed the rifle and jumped down from the car.

"I'm coming, Watongi!" he shouted. "Keep him busy!"

In a few seconds, Biff was ten feet away from the furious leopard. He lifted the rifle to his shoulder, took a quick aim at the head of the cat, and squeezed the trigger.

The blast exploded like a bomb. The recoil of the rifle lifted Biff off the ground and plopped him flat on his back.

"Good! Good!" exclaimed Watongi.

The body of the 150-pound leopard lay on the ground lifeless. Its head was partly shot away. The long sharp claws had ripped deep ridges in the ground.

Watongi helped Biff to his feet. He had a broad grin on his face. "Good shoot! Good shoot!" he said.

"Thank you, Watongi," said Biff. "But you're the one who deserves the credit. You saved my life."

"Masai spear very good, eh?" said the little native happily. He seemed much more anxious to have his prize possession praised than himself.

"Spear very good, Watongi," said Biff. "Watongi very good too."

A few minutes later, Mr. Becker and Monda emerged from the woods on the run.

"What is it? What is it?" shouted Becker.

"Look at what Watongi and I bagged, Uncle Warren," said Biff, placing his arm around the native's shoulder.

"Well, I'll be—" exclaimed Becker. "You probably got the best prize of the whole safari. Imagine—a full grown leopard!"

"The real credit belongs to Watongi," said Biff, as he described what had happened.

Mr. Becker patted Watongi on the back. This pleased the small native a great deal. Monda then made a short speech of praise in Swahili, which only Watongi understood. The little man listened to him with an ear-to-ear grin on his face.

The carcass of the leopard was loaded on the floor of the Land Rover, and they drove back to camp in time for lunch.

Henderson seemed envious, but even he had to admit that Biff and Watongi were worthy of recognition for their brave act.

Mathews was pleased. "Now, with the leopard destroyed," he said, "perhaps the other game will return to this area. We should have some good shooting."

"Fine," said Henderson. "I hope you're right."

Biff watched one of the crew skin the leopard, salt the hide, and stretch it out to dry. Watongi relinquished all claim to the hide, as long as he could keep the spear.

"Well, Biff, you got yourself a fine trophy to ship home," said Mathews. "Since you don't have a game license, I'll make out an official report saying you shot

the leopard in self-defense. This will cover you with the law."

"Thanks, Mr. Mathews. Wait till Mom and Dad and the twins see this," said Biff excitedly. "I sure want to see their faces when this skin arrives home."

Late that afternoon, a small Land Rover drove across the plains and stopped at the camp. The car was driven by Elgin Wakefield, one of the very few game rangers in the territory.

"What happened to your boy there?" asked Mathews. He was referring to one of the three natives riding with Wakefield. The boy had a crude bandage wrapped around his shoulder.

"He was shot."

"How did that happen?"

"We have been trying to catch up with some poachers!" explained Wakefield. "I guess we got close to them. One took a pot shot at us from ambush and hit Msome in the shoulder. I'm taking him to the hospital in Nairobi."

While having tea, Wakefield talked about the illegal traffic in ivory and what it was doing to the elephant population in the area.

"The only way to stop this," the ranger said, "is to stop the foreign market for the ivory."

"What do you mean by that, Mr. Wakefield?" asked Biff.

"With a market for the ivory, the native poachers

get aggressive and resort to all forms of destruction to make a few pennies."

"Do they make much—the poachers, I mean?" Biff inquired.

"No. They get the equivalent of about twenty cents a pound for ivory from the smugglers. Eventually the ivory is sold on the foreign market for nine or ten dollars a pound. A good tusk would weigh over a hundred pounds."

"Boy, that's some profit!" Biff whistled.

"It sure is, Biff. And the native takes most of the chances," continued Wakefield. "But without a foreign market, the poachers would become discouraged, and we might be able to save the elephant herds."

Wakefield explained how the traffic worked. The poachers usually sold their ivory to a native middleman who then trucked it to a secret hiding place on the coast where it was stored until it could be smuggled out of the country.

"Unless we find some way to stop this ruthless slaying of elephants, the few herds left will be extinct in two or three years." Wakefield had a note of anger in his voice.

They discussed the large number of carcasses they had seen so far and also told Wakefield of the small elephant held captive by the wire slip-noose, which Mathews had had to destroy.

Wakefield said that the poachers were very inven-

tive. The slip-noose was one common method they used. But, he explained, other devices were even more productive for the poachers.

He mentioned the muzzle-loaders which evidently had been used against the elephants they had seen the second day of the safari. He also told of the use of arrows whose points had been dipped in acokanthera poison.

"The poison kills slowly, especially if it is stale," he explained. "In fact, in almost any form of slaying used by the poachers, the animal doesn't die immediately, but goes through a period of needlessly cruel suffering."

As the ranger talked, Biff touched his pocket in a casual movement. He traced the outline of the Interpol ID card, and hoped that he and his uncle might still have a hand in stopping this ruthless murder of elephants. But so far, there had been no real clues that could be followed up.

Before they set up another camp that evening, they had seen another poacher's trick at work. They came upon a small rhinoceros which had fallen into a brush-covered pit. The helpless creature was impaled on wooden spikes which had been planted in the bottom of the pit. Mathews had to finish it off with a shot through the brain.

Biff had a difficult time trying to get to sleep that night. The report of the game ranger on the useless

slaying of hundreds of elephants, the ruthlessness of the poachers and, finally, the face-to-face experience with the helpless baby rhino which had had to be destroyed crowded his thoughts. There was no room for sleep in his mind. He lay on the bed, tossing restlessly and staring at the canvas ceiling.

His uncle came into the tent. "You still awake, Biff?" he asked.

"Yes, Uncle Warren. Just can't seem to get to sleep tonight."

"Probably overtired, Biff. You'll feel better in the morning."

"Hope so. Good night, Uncle Warren." Biff turned over on his side and tried to blank out everything from his mind.

Mr. Becker began to undress quietly. Suddenly a mournful howl reached them. It seemed to come from just outside the tent. It was a crescendo that sounded like "Coo-e-e-e-" starting with a low note, rising sharply, and ending with a shrill, high-pitched sound.

CHAPTER XI

Hidden Cache

“WHAT in the world was that, Uncle Warren?” Biff gasped.

“Oh, probably a hyena scavenging not far from the camp,” explained Mr. Becker. “Probably smelled the deer steaks we had tonight and wants to try to get some.”

“It sounded as if he’s just outside the tent!”

“I don’t think so, Biff. The hyena is a natural ventriloquist. Hard to tell where he is by his howl.”

The sound came again.

“I always thought a hyena laughed, Uncle Warren,” Biff said. “You know—the ‘laughing hyena.’ That didn’t sound like laughter to me.”

Mr. Becker chuckled. "Well," he said, "a hyena does have another cry. He usually utters it when he is sitting around waiting for a lion to finish his kill. It's a hair-raising noise."

"Does he think he'll scare the lion away?"

"Maybe he thinks so, but I'm sure it doesn't bother the lion. He knows the hyenas won't make a move until he leaves."

"Is this hair-raising noise anything like laughter?" asked Biff.

"Well—I'd say it's more like the hysterical cackle that might have come from a medieval torture chamber," said Mr. Becker.

"That's a good description, Uncle Warren," Biff said, laughing. "Is the hyena dangerous to man?"

"It sure is! It has been known to come right into a tent and bite off a sleeping man's hand or part of a face."

"Wow!" exclaimed Biff.

"A hyena has very powerful jaws and very hard, pointed teeth," explained Mr. Becker. "One loud crunch, and it bites right through a thick bone. It doesn't gnaw like a dog."

"Well, I hope no hyena decides to come into our camp."

"I wouldn't worry about it," reassured Mr. Becker. "Try to get some sleep now. We've got a big day ahead of us tomorrow."

"OK, Uncle Warren. Good night again."

Sometime later, Biff woke up suddenly. There seemed to be an unusual foul smell in the air. Then suddenly a terrific clatter of pans and dishes ripped the night's silence. This was followed by a string of human shouts.

Mr. Becker rolled out of bed, grabbed his rifle, and dashed out of the tent. Biff rushed after him. Mathews, Henderson, and the rest of the crew were already crowded around the kitchen tent.

"What in the world happened?" asked Mr. Becker.

"A hyena got into the kitchen tent and tried to steal the frying pan with the deer drippings in it," Mathews told him. "Look at this pan!"

The thick iron skillet was twisted out of shape.

"Do you mean to say that the hyena did that with his teeth?" asked Biff.

"He sure did, Biff," replied the White Hunter. "Hyenas have terrifically powerful jaws, you know. I think this one may try to sneak back, but we'll fool him."

During the next ten minutes, Biff was fascinated as he watched Mathews fix up a trap gun, aided by light from a portable spotlight.

The Hunter propped a rifle on two forked sticks that had been driven into the ground. Some bait was tied around and over the muzzle of the rifle with the string fastened to the front of the trigger guard.

"How will this work?" asked Biff.

"I'm not quite finished yet, Biff," said Mathews. "Just wait a couple of minutes, and you'll get the idea."

The Hunter then ran another cord from the trigger to a tree. Some bushes were cut and set on the ground around the trap. This left an opening so the intended victim would have to approach the bait from the front.

"Now," said Mathews, "when the hyena takes the bait in his mouth and draws away, he fires the gun and gets a bullet in his throat."

"It'll probably blow the back of his head off," Biff exclaimed.

"It might do that, all right, Biff," said the Hunter. "But a hyena is a very dangerous creature to have prowling around camp, especially in these parts."

"Why 'especially in these parts,' Mr. Mathews?"

"Well, some of the tribes, like the Kikuyu, occasionally still leave their dead out in the open for the hyenas to dispose of. The hyena soon learns how helpless a dead or sleeping man is and gets bold."

"Do you really think our visitor will come back, Mr. Mathews?"

"It wouldn't surprise me, Biff. He'll probably wait until he thinks we're all asleep. That bait should attract him."

"Hope it works," said Biff.

"We'll know in the morning," replied the Hunter. "All right, everyone, let's get back to sleep. We may have a busy day tomorrow."

The excited chattering of the native crew just after sunrise awoke Biff. The gun trap had worked perfectly. The bullet had ripped a ragged hole out of the neck of the evil-looking creature.

Biff had never seen a spotted hyena at close range before. He spent several minutes studying the queer-shaped carcass. The animal was about five feet in head and body length and must have weighed over 150 pounds. It had a broad, ugly face, rounded ears, a short tail, and heavy limbs. The body was covered with coarse, scanty gray fur, spotted with a great many irregular blotches of brown. The animal's front legs were longer than its hind ones, so that the body would slope downwards from the high neck and shoulders to the foot-long coarse-haired tail.

Mr. Mathews ordered two of the crew to bury the carcass so as not to attract any other scavengers.

"Well," he remarked, "that's one more varmint we won't have to worry about."

While traveling on the morning of the eighth day, they unexpectedly came upon a small shack, partly hidden by jungle growth. The shack seemed to have been built hastily with rough, unpainted wooden planks.

"What have we here?" asked Uncle Warren.

"Don't know," said Mathews. "I haven't been in this area for a couple of years."

The White Hunter stopped the caravan and yelled, "Hello, in there! Anybody home?"

There was no answer, so they entered the shack. There was a table and several crudely built chairs. On the wood floor there were scraps of food, several empty tin cans, and a pile of sacks.

Biff was curious about the strange place and began to poke around to see what he could find.

"Hey, look at these!" he said. He held up a beautifully carved statue of polished mahogany embedded with diamonds. It had been hidden under the sacks. There were five other jeweled statues also concealed by burlap.

"These are valuable pieces of art!" Mathews exclaimed in amazement.

"They must be worth a fortune," commented Uncle Warren. "Wonder who brought them here."

Monda picked up one of the carved statues and examined it. The features were finely chiseled, and the jewels sparkled.

"This very, very expensive," remarked Monda.

"Wonder why they put a wooden floor on a place like this," remarked Biff. He lifted one of the wooden floor boards.

"Hey! Look what else I found!" he exclaimed.

Under the floor, also carefully wrapped in burlap, they found ten large elephant tusks. Each was close to seven feet long and must have weighed well over one hundred pounds.

"At nine or ten dollars a pound, these tusks would bring in a great deal of money on the illegal market," said Mathews.

"You've made quite a discovery here, Biff," his uncle commented. "I suppose this shack is one of the way-stations for the poachers. They probably stash the stuff here and pick it up later."

"It would seem that way," said Mathews. "And it looks very much as though the same group is also interested in getting valuable art pieces like those jeweled mahogany statues."

"Obviously stolen."

"Undoubtedly. Probably stolen from a wealthy home or a museum," said Mathews. "The loot is gathered here and then transported to the coast somehow and shipped out illegally."

Henderson spoke up now.

"We're on private property," he pointed out. "We have no right to disturb anything here or even enter the shack."

"I differ with you, Mr. Henderson," said Mathews. "This is evidence of something definitely against the law. It ties in with the destroyed elephants we saw and with Wakefield's story."

"So—what do you plan to do?" asked Henderson defiantly.

"I think we should take the tusks and statues with us. I will turn them over to the police when we reach Mombasa."

"Well, well," said Henderson sarcastically. "So now you're working for the police. You know what I think, Mr. Mathews?"

"No, I don't, Mr. Henderson. And furthermore, I don't care!"

The friction between the White Hunter and the Englishman had sparked up again. There followed a bitter and unpleasant argument.

While the two men were talking, Uncle Warren had moved about the room casually. Biff followed his uncle's actions, and saw him place his Winchester on the floor and then kick some burlap sacks over it.

Henderson and Mathews were still facing each other trading verbal punches, when Mr. Becker moved between the two.

"Gentlemen, we'll never get anywhere this way," he said.

The two angry men turned to him. "I think, Mr. Mathews, that Mr. Henderson may have a point," Uncle Warren went on. "After all, this shack must be the private property of someone. I suggest we leave the tusks and the statues here. You can make a report

to the police as soon as we reach the city. They can follow it up if they feel it is essential."

"Now, that makes more sense," said Henderson. "I'm for that."

Mathews was not happy with this solution. He was still angered by Henderson's implied accusation that the White Hunter had wanted to take the ivory and the statues for his own profit. However, he decided not to argue the point further.

"All right," he said in a resigned voice, "but I'm sure this evidence will be gone by the time the police get here."

At first, Biff had been surprised at his uncle's stand. Then he realized that it would be unwise to remove the evidence. This discovery was the first tangible lead to the smuggling ring. Biff knew his uncle had something up his sleeve.

A small hunting car had driven up with two rough-looking men in it. The driver spoke up.

"Hello," he said. "My name is Gregory. This is Mr. Baxter. We're on a photographic expedition and happened to spot your caravan, so we came over. Strange place for a shack, isn't it?"

"Yes, it is," said Mathews, eyeing the strangers closely. "How come you haven't a professional hunter with you? That is the usual requirement here."

"Oh, he was taken sick," said Gregory.

"That's right," joined in the other man. "He caught a fever, so we left him back at the camp. He said it would be all right as long as we are only taking pictures."

Biff nudged Mathews and pointed to the gun rack. Mathews nodded.

"How come the two high-powered rifles there in the rack?" he asked.

"Oh," said the driver, "just for protection in case we are attacked by dangerous animals."

"I don't see a camera," said Mathews.

The driver reached under the seat and produced an old German camera.

"A fine machine. Had it for years."

Mathews either was still smarting from the argument he had had with Henderson or he was trying to do what he felt was his duty. At any rate, he pressed for more information.

"What is the name of your professional White Hunter?" he asked.

"Selby."

"Frank G. Selby?" asked Uncle Warren.

"Yes, that's him. Do you know him?" asked Baxter.

"I used to several years ago," Biff's uncle said. "A fine guide."

"Yes, one of the best. But he's getting old, you know, and gets sick easily now. So we left him at camp, as I said."

Biff chanced to look at Monda's face. He gulped when he noticed what he thought was a silent communication going on between Monda and the rider in the jeep. The two were looking at each other, and Monda nodded slightly as if he were signaling a message.

The jeep finally took off. Reluctantly, Mathews ordered the safari to continue without removing anything from the shack.

As they rode along, Biff asked his uncle what he thought of the two strangers.

"One thing is certain," Mr. Becker said. "Those men were lying."

"What makes you say that?" Biff asked.

"Frank G. Selby was killed by a rhino two years ago!" Uncle Warren replied.

Biff then told his uncle what he had observed between Monda and the rider in the jeep.

"What do you think the message meant?" Uncle Warren asked.

"Maybe that we were going to leave the ivory and the statues in the shack."

"You think they might have hijacked us, if we had taken the stuff along with us?"

"Could be," said Biff. "They did have two mean-looking rifles in that gun rack."

"So I noticed," said his uncle. "And it is possible that they might have someone planted with the

safari, though it's hard to believe that it might be Monda."

"I don't want to believe it, Uncle Warren. I like Monda."

"Are you sure Monda gave a sign?"

"Oh, I can't say I'm dead certain," said Biff. "Maybe I just thought I saw something."

Becker scratched his head, more vigorously than ever this time.

"A lot of funny things have been happening on this safari, Biff. Something else was queer about that meeting."

"You mean like Mr. Mathews not knowing that the hunter Selby was dead?"

"You're a pretty sharp boy, Biff. I didn't think you caught that. Yes, Mathews has been worrying me. I'm sure he must know that Selby was killed. Yet he accepted the lie without question."

"Could this mean that Mathews is in on the smuggling racket, too?" asked Biff, somewhat puzzled. "You remember that he was all for taking the tusks and the statues with us, so *he* could turn them over to the police."

"Or he might have tried to sell them himself for profit," added Warren Becker.

"That's what Mr. Henderson figured," Biff said.

Uncle Warren had a smile on his face.

"I'm planning to go back to that shack tonight,

Biff," he said. "I may get a chance to spot some of the smugglers when they come for the loot. They are sure to try to get that stuff out as soon as possible."

"I suppose you are going back to find your 'lost' Winchester?"

Uncle Warren looked at Biff and broke out laughing. "Nothing much gets by you, does it, Biff?"

"That didn't. Just happened to see you hide the rifle."

"Hope no one else saw me do it."

They traveled about ten miles before setting up camp. There Warren Becker reported to Mathews that his Winchester rifle was missing. He said he must have forgotten it at the shack, and asked if he could borrow the Land Rover and return to the hut to fetch the rifle.

Mathews did not like the idea. He argued that Becker might run into trouble if he should meet the poachers. And besides, the Hunter pointed out, darkness would be falling in a short time.

"If I hurry, I can get there and back before dark," Becker assured him. "And if I should run into the poachers, well, I'll just turn around and come back."

"I would prefer that you didn't take this risk, Mr. Becker," Mathews said, "but I suppose you have a right to borrow the car to find your rifle."

When Henderson heard of Becker's plan he complained bitterly.

"Two more days! That's all that's left of this safari. All we have are a few small animals, we saw a lot of dead elephants, and spent half the time arguing. I don't know why I decided to come on this trip in the first place."

"You invited yourself, Mr. Henderson," reminded Mathews.

"I know, I know," said Henderson. "But we'll have more delays if Becker gets lost or runs into trouble. The police will find his rifle. Why does he have to go back for it now?"

"That's an expensive rifle, Mr. Henderson," said Warren Becker. "I wouldn't want to lose it. As for getting lost, I believe I know my way around this area a lot better than most men."

"OK, OK!" said Henderson. "But if you get into trouble, you'll have to get yourself out of it. I won't lift a finger to help you."

"I'll take that chance, Henderson." It was obvious now that Becker and Henderson had also reached a point where their regard for each other registered zero.

Just before Biff's uncle left camp, he called Biff aside.

"I'm not going to get back before dark," he confided, "but I'll try to get back before sun-up. I may have to wait around for a while before the poachers

or the smugglers return for the loot. Don't worry about me."

"What if you don't get back by morning, Uncle?" Biff asked anxiously.

"I'll get back, don't worry. If they don't show up, I'll just pick up my rifle and return here."

Biff had a difficult time falling asleep that night. He knew they were now close to the trail of the smugglers, but this also increased the danger. His uncle seemed to be walking right into it. And besides, Biff wasn't sure about where anyone else on the safari stood.

Many disturbing questions raced through his mind as he lay on the cot. Mathews must have known that Selby was dead. Why had he played dumb when the men lied? Henderson also had turned out to be a peculiar person. He had no concern for any one's feelings or safety, and even less regard for animals. Had he joined the safari for another purpose?

And then there was Monda. About him, Biff was confused and disturbed. Monda seemed to be a good friend. Yet at times it appeared that he wanted to delay or wreck the safari. He usually sided with Henderson against Mathews. And then that silent understanding between Monda and the man in the jeep. Had this been real or imaginary?

Another thought wrapped itself around the image

of Mao, the native boy who had deserted camp. Had he actually pushed those snakes into the tent to try to kill Biff or his uncle?

Biff shivered a little as he felt the hostility and danger which seemed to surround him. Finally from sheer exhaustion, he fell asleep.

As the morning sun shot a slice of yellow light into the tent, Biff woke up suddenly. He was still tired and tense. He looked over toward his uncle's cot.

The cot hadn't been slept in!

CHAPTER XII

Enemy Trap

BIFF dressed quickly and rushed out to see Mathews. He poured out his concern for his uncle and pleaded with the White Hunter to look for him. Before Mathews could reply, Henderson had pushed his way into the discussion.

"I say we should do nothing about Becker," he snorted angrily. "He knew that he was going on his own responsibility."

"But Mr. Henderson—" Biff began.

"No buts about it, young man," Henderson interrupted. "I've paid good money to go on this safari. I told your uncle I would not lift a finger if he got into

trouble. Well, if he's in trouble, let him get out of it himself."

Biff was stunned by the utter lack of concern on the part of Henderson about the safety, perhaps even the life, of another human being.

"You can't be that cruel, Mr. Henderson," he protested.

"Oh, can't I? Becker wanted to stick his nose in other people's affairs. He can look after himself."

"Just a minute, Mr. Henderson," said Mathews. "I happen to be in charge of this safari. And I make the decisions."

"You're in charge all right, and a terrible job you've done of it!" Henderson exclaimed. "First you wanted to grab the ivory and statues for yourself. Then you sent Becker back to get them. Oh, don't think I didn't figure that out. You two going to share equally in the profit?"

Mathews started toward Henderson, but then checked himself. Biff admired the self-control that the White Hunter displayed. Henderson was surely asking for a punch in the nose.

"You can stay here or go on to Mombasa yourself, if you want to, Henderson," said Mathews with finality. "I'm responsible for the safety of everyone on the safari. Becker may be in serious danger. It would be easier for me if you would stick with us, but that's up to you."

For answer, Henderson turned on his heel and walked away.

In a few minutes, Monda and Biff were in the hunting car with Mathews at the wheel, and they were heading back toward the shack. Henderson, fuming with anger, had remained in the camp with the native crew.

They covered the ten miles back to the shack in about a half hour.

"There's the Land Rover!" shouted Biff.

"Your uncle must have parked it and walked the rest of the way," said Mathews. "We better do the same."

They parked the hunting car alongside the Land Rover and walked cautiously the fifty feet to the shack. The building was empty. But obviously there had been a struggle. The tables and stools were tipped over.

"Here is my uncle's yellow neckerchief," Biff exclaimed excitedly, picking up the gift the twins had given to their uncle. "He may have left it on the floor so we would know he had been here," he added thoughtfully.

"Quite likely," said Mathews. "Or it may have dropped off in the struggle."

The Winchester rifle that Becker had hidden was missing. They found four tusks and two statues still concealed under the floor.

"They must have come for the loot and found your uncle, Biff," commented Mathews.

"That's probably it, Mr. Mathews. But they only took six tusks and four statues. Why didn't they take all the loot?" Biff wondered.

"Maybe they have only small car," suggested Monda. "Maybe they come back."

"I know my uncle is in serious trouble, Mr. Mathews," Biff said. "Can't we do something?"

"We don't know where to begin to look, Biff," said Mathews. "Only thing we can do is get to Mombasa as soon as possible and report this business to the police."

"We don't have time for that, Mr. Mathews!" Biff was growing more worried every minute. "Can't Monda and I take the Land Rover and do a little searching? Maybe we can find some clues."

Monda then did a strange thing. He stepped forward and spoke in an unfriendly tone.

"I will not go with you!"

This refusal to help dealt Biff a severe blow. He looked with astonishment at the boy he had thought was his friend.

"I don't understand, Monda," he said. "I thought we were buddies."

"I'm not going with you to look for your uncle," Monda repeated stolidly.

At that moment, the sound of an approaching car

was heard. All three rushed out of the hut. Mathews held his rifle in ready position.

It was the car of the photographic safari, which had come to the shack the day before. This time the driver, Gregory, was alone.

"I was taking early morning pictures and spotted your two cars over there," said Gregory. "Something wrong?"

Mathews questioned him, but he said he had not seen anyone in the area the evening before or in the morning.

After hearing of Becker's disappearance, Gregory turned to Biff.

"Want to come with me?" he asked. "I know Mr. Mathews has to look after his safari crew and equipment and probably can't leave to drive you into Mombasa."

"Mr. Gregory is right, Biff," Mathews said. "This should be reported to the police in Mombasa, but I can't just up and leave the safari."

"I understand, Mr. Mathews, but we must do something," said Biff.

The driver of the photographic car repeated his offer to take Biff to the police in Mombasa. "I have to buy some more film anyway," he added. "It won't take but a few hours."

Because of his earlier suspicions about the man, Biff hesitated for a moment. Then he decided he had to

take the chance. There was no time to be lost, and besides he might have been mistaken about Gregory. The stranger did appear to be friendly and willing to help.

"Biff hopped in the car seat next to Gregory, and they began to drive across the veldt, heading south-east. Biff looked back at Monda, but the native boy had already gone into the shack.

"Sure appreciate this, Mr. Gregory," Biff said to his companion.

"No trouble at all," the other replied.

"Thanks a lot. By the way, my name is Bruce Brewster. My friends call me Biff."

"OK, Biff. Don't worry. We'll be in Mombasa in a short while."

As they bounced along over the rough ground, Biff kept thinking about Monda. On his experiences in other countries, he had always found a loyal friend. He thought of Kamuka and what they had gone through together in the *Brazilian Gold Mine Mystery*. Then there was Li Mahenili, who had helped him solve the *Hawaiian Sea Hunt Mystery*. And, of course, there was Chuba, who had risked his life so Biff could sneak into Chinese Communist territory when they were involved in the *Mystery of the Chinese Ring*.

He thought he had found another friend in Monda, but now he knew he was mistaken. He dismissed the

disturbing thought from his mind. His main objective now was to reach the police and enlist their help in finding Uncle Warren.

They had been traveling about fifteen minutes, when the driver veered in a southerly direction.

"I might as well pick up my partner," said Gregory. "He will want to ride into town with us. Won't take but a few minutes longer."

"Sure, sure, Mr. Gregory," said Biff. "But I do hope we will hurry. I'm terribly anxious about my uncle."

"Of course you are. Don't worry. We'll make it all right." Then Gregory pointed up ahead. "There's my partner now."

In the distance they could see three men standing under a tree. As the car drew closer, Biff thought there was something familiar about them. Suddenly Biff's jaw dropped.

Two of the three men were G. Carfu and G. Wallo, who had tried to kidnap him at the air terminal in Nairobi. The third man was Mao, the native who had deserted the safari after Biff had been attacked by the poisonous snakes!

CHAPTER XIII

Narrow Escape

BIFF jumped from the moving car, lost his balance, and landed sprawling on the ground. He had acted instinctively, but knew his chances of getting away from the four men, on the open plain, were practically nonexistent.

He was immediately seized. His hands and feet were tied, and he was tossed to the floor in the rear of the car. The others climbed in, and the car moved off again.

"How did you work it, Gregory?" asked Carfu.

"Oh, it was simple. He was just waiting to be picked up."

"How about Mathews? Did he make a fuss?" Wallo wanted to know.

"No. He played it right. Just the way we wanted

it," replied the driver, with a nervous snicker indicating he was proud of what he had done.

"The chief will like this," remarked Carfu.

Gregory turned his head toward Carfu, who was sitting next to him. "The chief! The chief!" he exclaimed. "I've heard nothing but that for days. Who's the chief anyway?"

"None of us know, but we'll meet him in a couple of days."

"Yes," Wallo joined in. "We have big cargo to go this time."

"What about the stuff that's left at the shack? Still four ivories and a couple of statues there," said Gregory.

"That will be picked up by one of the gang tonight or tomorrow."

Biff's shoulder and hip ached from bouncing on the hard floor of the car, but he tried to catch every word of the conversation so he would learn more of the smugglers' plans. If only he could escape somehow, he certainly could identify this gang.

"Well, we better get out here and walk to the cabin," said the driver, after an hour of travel.

The rope binding Biff's feet was untied, and he was ordered to walk in front of the others along a trail which had been cut through a large patch of dense brush.

In a few minutes, they reached a cabin. It was

somewhat larger than the shack and was hidden by trees and large leafed vines. Unless one were very close to it, he would never suspect it was there.

"In you go, young man." Gregory shoved Biff through the door.

Boxes and crates were stacked along the walls of the room. At one end were piles of large elephant tusks, separated from each other by layers of burlap. Biff decided that this must be the way-station to which the ivory and other stolen objects were transported from various parts of the area. From here the articles probably were trucked out to the coast and then smuggled onto a waiting ship bound for foreign ports.

"Oh, if I could only get away now!" Biff said to himself. This was evidence Interpol could use. If he could get word to the police soon, they might be able to catch the whole band of smugglers red-handed. But Biff didn't know that he was in for some more surprises.

He was hustled through an inside door and into another room of the cabin.

"Uncle Warren!" Biff cried as he recognized another prisoner sitting on the floor. His uncle's hands and feet were bound.

"Biff!" Uncle Warren gasped. "How in the world did you get trapped into this?"

While one of the men retied Biff's ankles, he told

his uncle briefly of what had happened. Soon the two were left alone, helpless, on the floor.

"We've been a couple of dopes, Biff," Uncle Warren sighed. "I walked right into a trap, too."

He told Biff that when he had returned to the shack, it was empty. He waited, hoping the smugglers would come. As time went on and no one came, he had decided to start back to camp. When he was about to leave, three men arrived and trapped him inside. He had tried to fight his way out, but the odds were too great.

"We found your yellow neckerchief on the floor," said Biff.

"I knew you would. I left it there to show that I had been there. I hoped you would figure that I had left against my will."

"We did figure it that way," said Biff.

"Some of the tusks and a few of the statues were packed in the truck," replied Becker, "but they couldn't take them all. I suppose they'll return there for the rest of the loot."

"Yes," Biff said. "On the way here, I heard them say the rest of the stuff will be picked up tonight or tomorrow. What do you think they'll do to us?"

"I don't know, Biff. They are pretty heartless. I've been here since last night and haven't had anything to eat yet." Warren Becker shook his head. "I'm sorry to have gotten you in such a tough spot."

"Oh, it's OK, Uncle Warren. If we get out alive, it will have been an exciting experience."

"It's a hopeful thought, anyway, Biff. Our only chance is through that window." Becker nodded his head in the direction of a small, glassless opening about six feet off the floor. It was covered by a crudely made shutter.

Biff rolled back and forth on the floor. "Wow, every muscle in my body aches," he groaned. "This floor is plenty hard especially after that rough ride. How are your ankles and wrists, Uncle Warren? Mine are all chafed, and they sure burn."

"Mine, too, Biff," said his uncle.

The two rolled on the floor and rested as close to the door as they dared. They hoped they might overhear conversation which would give them more information about the gang. The smugglers apparently were busy packing the contraband, since they seemed to move around the outer room of the cabin without saying very much.

Toward evening, however, several other men must have come into the cabin. The conversation picked up considerably.

Biff nudged his uncle. "Can that be Monda's voice?" he whispered unbelievably.

"Sure sounds like him, Biff," his uncle whispered back.

They lay still so they could hear more. There was

talk about the "chief" himself planning to be at the main warehouse in Mombasa the next day. That no one knew who the "chief" really was became apparent from the conversation of the men.

"Who is he anyway?" asked one voice.

"I don't know," another voice answered. "But I did hear he is not happy with the way things have been run around here, and he's come for a personal inspection."

The talk also indicated that a good-sized haul was being made this time. The cargo would be loaded from the main warehouse in Mombasa and shipped out to Zanzibar during the night.

Then someone asked a question which caused Biff to freeze:

"What are we going to do with those two in the other room?"

"What two are you talking about?" asked the voice which sounded like Monda's.

"Oh, that American boy and his uncle. They've been snooping around, and they know too much."

Then a voice which sounded like Carfu's broke in.

"We know they are working for Interpol. We must get rid of them."

"Interpol? How did you find that out?"

"Find out! Ha, we knew it from the beginning," Carfu bragged. "We have inside information. Small boss says we must get rid of them before we go."

"Who in the world is the small boss?" whispered Biff.

"Probably the local middle man in this area," his uncle said. "I suppose the smuggling ring has a local man in charge of district operations."

"Yes," said Biff, "and the 'big chief' in the ring hasn't been happy with the way the agent has been operating. That's why he's come here himself to make an inspection."

"That's just about it. If we could only get away, we might be able to snare the agent, the big chief himself, and all the guys working for them."

They stopped talking so they could listen to more from the other room.

A voice asked, "How are you going to get rid of them?"

Carfu answered, "After we get the stuff packed on the truck, we'll drop them off in the jungle, all tied up. They'll make a good dinner for some hungry leopard."

"The man is an experienced hunter. He knows his way around the jungle."

"Well, then," said Carfu, "we'll shoot them first. There'll be no evidence. The hyenas and the ants will finish them off."

Biff felt a shiver race through his body when he heard this. Then Monda's voice sounded again.

"Do you think the chief will approve of these methods?"

"Look, squirt," said a rough voice, "you're new here. We'll handle this our way. The chief, whoever he is, will have to like it."

There was a moment of silence. Biff could almost feel the tension in the other room. Biff leaned toward his uncle.

"What do you think is going to happen to us?" he asked tensely.

"I don't know, Biff. Frankly, I'm worried." There was a weariness in his uncle's voice which disturbed Biff. Warren Becker was weak from lack of food and the fact that he had been tied up for nearly twenty-four hours.

"Are you OK, Uncle?" he asked.

"I'm awfully tired, Biff," said Becker. Then after a pause, he continued, "But we'll get out of this predicament somehow, boy. As long as we are alive, we have a chance."

Biff felt a tinge of pride. His uncle was certainly not a quitter. Biff relaxed his muscles and soon was asleep.

Sometime later, Biff woke up suddenly. The cords binding his hands had been cut. The room was dark except for a dim beam of moonlight that flowed in through a crack in the shutter on the window.

Biff nudged his dozing uncle.

"Uncle Warren," he whispered. "Someone has cut the rope on my hands."

"I'll be darned!" said Becker in a voice which showed that sleep had restored some of his strength. "Who did it?"

"I don't know. Someone must have sneaked in here when we were asleep and cut them."

"Good, untie me quickly."

It didn't take long for Biff to free his uncle. The two crawled toward the window. As they tried to push open the shutter, it made a squeaking sound which sounded very loud and shrill in the stillness of the night.

"Down! Down!" said Mr. Becker. His warning was timely. They fell to the floor and held their hands behind them as though they were still bound. They had already kicked the ropes into a corner.

The door from the other room swung open. A man walked in, struck a match, and squinted a swift glance toward the two prisoners. Apparently satisfied that they were asleep, he left.

Biff breathed a sigh of relief. "Boy," he said almost to himself, "that was a close one."

After a few minutes, the two quietly returned to the window. Slowly, inch by inch, they forced open the shutter and crawled out.

They crawled slowly through the brush and then

began to hurry across the plain heading southeast. They weren't sure, but assumed that Mombasa lay in that direction.

After walking for several hours, they stopped to rest. In spite of the danger of being pursued or of meeting some wild animals, Biff felt exhilarated. It was wonderful to be free again. The dark sky, dimly lighted by a hazy moon and pierced by blinking stars, hung like a protective canopy over them. A soft, warm breeze brushed his face.

"I hope we're going in the right direction, Uncle Warren," said Biff.

"We can't be too far off, Biff. Let's continue this way for another hour and see what we come to," Mr. Becker suggested.

They reached the outskirts of the island city of Mombasa just as the morning light was beginning to sweep away the eerie shadows of night. An approaching truck still had its headlights on.

"Hey! Hey! Please give us a lift," Biff yelled to the native driver.

The driver stopped and waited for them to catch up with him. Fortunately he knew enough English to understand that they wanted to get to the police. He also offered each some bananas which he was trucking to the market. These were most welcome as by this time both Biff and Uncle Warren were very hungry.

Ten minutes later, Biff and Becker were rushing up the front steps and through the doors of the police station.

"We wish to see the Police Inspector immediately," Becker said to a uniformed clerk sitting behind an undersized desk.

"The Inspector is not on duty at this hour," said the clerk in an official tone. "One of the police sergeants is in charge."

"All right, we'll see the sergeant," said Warren Becker. "But please hurry."

The clerk snapped a buzzer on an intercommunication set and a few moments later said, "Follow me, please."

They were led into a side room. As they entered, Biff suddenly grabbed his uncle's arm and squeezed it hard.

CHAPTER XIV

The Enemy Is Everywhere

BIFF had recognized the police sergeant. He was Baxter, one of the two men who had come to the shack, claiming to be on a photographic safari. He was the one Biff had thought was exchanging signals with Monda. A member of the smuggler's ring and stationed right in the police department!

"Good morning, sergeant," said Biff, thinking quickly. "My uncle and I got separated from our safari and had to walk into town. Can you tell us where the hotel is?" Biff acted as though he had never seen the man before.

Uncle Warren did not recognize the sergeant, but

figured Biff was up to something. He decided to let Biff do most of the talking.

"What hotel?" asked the sergeant bluntly.

"The Nyali Beach Hotel," Uncle Warren replied promptly. He realized Biff would not have known what to answer.

The desk clerk who had led them into the room blurted out, "Why do you bother the sergeant with such foolish question? Hotel is only three blocks away. Why did you not ask me what you wished to know?" He was indignant.

The sergeant scowled at the clerk. "I'll handle this, Tsomba," he said. "We must treat our American visitors with courtesy." He nodded to Biff and his uncle. "I will arrange for transportation to the hotel for you."

Biff suspected this was another trap. He reacted quickly. "Oh, no, thank you very much. We'll find it." He grabbed his uncle's elbow and pulled him toward the door. "Sorry to have bothered you, sergeant," he called back. "We didn't know the hotel was so close."

After they had made a hasty exit from the station, Warren Becker stopped on the steps.

"Now, Biff, just what was that all about?" he demanded. "That sergeant looked like someone I had seen before." Biff told his uncle who the sergeant really was.

"Well!" said Uncle Warren. "Some spot we're in! The smugglers have moved right into the police department."

"How are we going to get word past them to Interpol?" asked Biff.

"I don't know. I can't think straight now, Biff." Mr. Becker took a deep breath, closed his eyes, and shook his head. "Let's go over to the hotel and get something to eat. Then we'll take a long shower with that wonderful hot water, and rest for a little while," he suggested.

"That's a good idea, Uncle Warren. We can use all three of those items. By that time, maybe we can think of something."

An hour later the two, refreshed, sat in their hotel room and discussed what they should do.

"The smugglers seem to be in all the important places. Now that the sergeant knows we are staying here, he certainly won't let phone calls get through to Interpol," Uncle Warren commented. "He'll plant someone at the switchboard in the hotel, and he'll have us watched to see if we go somewhere else."

"What about a telegram?" suggested Biff. "We can word it somehow so that Mr. Tambouri will know where we are and that we need help right away. We can probably get that through."

Not having any alternative to suggest, his uncle agreed to the plan. There was no telegraph service in

the hotel, so they would have to go direct to the telegraph office.

As they left the hotel, a cab pulled up. The driver asked if they needed a cab.

"We sure do," said Biff, "and in a hurry. We want to go to the telegraph office."

After several minutes, the cab traveled over the pontoon bridge connecting the modern city with the old town. Soon they were maneuvering through the narrow, twisted streets of the old Arab section of Mombasa.

Mr. Becker leaned forward and spoke to the driver.

"Just where is this telegraph office, driver?" he asked. "I thought it was only about six blocks from the hotel, in the New City."

"We'll be there soon," answered the driver. "This way avoids the traffic."

Suddenly the cab turned into an alley, deserted except for one car, and stopped. Four men rushed out of doorways and converged on the cab.

"Hey, what's this?" exclaimed Becker.

"It's another trap!" Biff yelled.

As the cab door was pulled open, Becker leaped out and started to swing at two men who were trying to grab him.

The door on Biff's side had also been pulled open. Biff swung wildly. The struggle lasted for several moments. Biff and his uncle were not going to be

taken easily. Finally they were overcome. The odds were too much against them.

Biff was shoved back into the cab at gunpoint. The two men flopped on the seat on each side of him.

The bigger of the two men spoke to the driver.

"OK, Harry, get going."

As they took off, Biff saw that his uncle was being hustled into the other car.

In about fifteen minutes, the cab and the car with Biff's uncle pulled up in front of an old six-story warehouse near the end of a long pier. This was undoubtedly, Biff decided, the loading point for the smuggled goods.

Stacks of long, narrow crates were located along the walls. Cartons and boxes of various sizes were lined along the other wall. Several men were carefully wrapping the burlap around elephant tusks, small statues and mosaics, and packing them into the crates.

In the rear of the building a wide double door was partly open. Biff noted that this led out onto a long ramp which slanted down toward the water. At the end of the ramp was an old skiff-type boat, about thirty feet long. Two men with a hand truck were hauling crates down the ramp and stacking them on the boat. Suddenly the man named Gregory appeared through a door.

"You two wait here," he ordered. Then he turned

to one of the men who had captured them. "Keep an eye on them, George. I'm going to see what the chief wants to do with them."

In a few minutes, he returned from a side room.

"Well, what did he decide?" asked the man called George.

"Chief says they know too much. We gotta get rid of them. We'll put them on the boat with the stuff tonight. Chief said to dump them overboard when we get a couple of miles out."

Biff felt a cold chill. "Did you hear that, Uncle Warren?" he gulped.

"I heard it, Biff. But don't worry, we'll get out of this mess yet," his uncle said encouragingly.

They were led to the top floor of the warehouse by Gregory and pushed into a room. "You won't get out of this place the way you did from that cabin in the jungle," Gregory chuckled as he slammed the door behind him and locked them in.

The room was empty except for a pile of dirty old burlap sacks lying in a corner. Dust on the floor and walls was like a thick coat of pebbly gray paint. Evidently the room had not been used for some time.

Light came in from the one window in the room. Biff went over to the window and looked out over what Uncle Warren told him was the "Old Harbour." In the distance they saw the Fort Jesus Prison crouching on a coral cliff. Biff had read about this historic

site. The fortress, built in the 16th century by the Portuguese, was remembered because of the large garrison which had been massacred by the Arabs while mass was being celebrated in 1630.

Directly under the window, sixty feet below, was a ledge of large rocks which extended some several feet from the base of the building before disappearing in the water of the harbor.

"If I could only clear those rocks, I might try diving into the water," suggested Biff.

"Impossible from here. The rocks extend a good ways out. You'd break your neck," said Mr. Becker. "And that's a sixty-foot drop if it's an inch."

"The height doesn't bother me too much," said Biff, "but I can't figure how to clear the rocks."

"Doesn't look good, Biff."

"Wait a minute, Uncle Warren. I've got an idea."

"What's that?"

"Let's make a rope out of the burlap sacks."

"They look pretty well rotted away," Uncle Warren objected. "Doubt whether you can find a dozen that would hold."

"Let's have a look anyway," Biff suggested. "They may not be too bad."

They picked over the sacks, twisted and tied up the less rotted ones, and actually managed to make a rope about twenty feet long.

"This wouldn't reach to the ground, Biff," Uncle

Warren said. "You'd still have a drop of about forty feet to the rocks. You'd break your neck."

"Who wants to drop to the rocks?" said Biff airily.

"I don't get it."

"I'll make like a trapeze artist," explained Biff. "I'll hang on the end of the rope. You swing me from side to side. When I'm out far enough over the water, I'll let go and pray that I land in the water instead of on the rocks."

"Too dangerous, Biff." Uncle Warren shook his head. "I couldn't let you do it."

"But Uncle, it's at least a chance. We won't have *any* chance if they dump us overboard two miles out, with sharks and all."

"But those sacks are pretty rotten and—"

"It's our only chance, Uncle Warren," Biff said quietly. "Come on, let's go."

"OK, Biff, and, you know, I'm quite proud of being your uncle."

"The feeling is mutual, Uncle Warren," Biff replied sincerely.

With his uncle holding one end of the makeshift sack rope, Biff climbed out of the window and slid down slowly to the end.

As Biff dangled forty feet above the rocks, his uncle slowly began to swing the rope from side to side. It became easier as the arc of the swing got

longer and longer. Soon Biff was swaying well out over the water.

Suddenly, one of the sacks began to tear. Biff knew he must let go.

"Here I go!" he yelled as he reached the top of the arc, and released his grasp.

His body dropped to the water in a curved flight. Just before he hit the surface, Biff jackknifed and plunged head first in a neat dive that cut the water with hardly a sound.

Except for a bruise on his shoulder where he hit some floating debris, Biff came back up to the surface in good shape, treading water for a few minutes to catch his breath and to get his bearings. Then he started to swim breast stroke so as not to make any splashing noise. Evidently no one had seen him because no outcry was raised.

He spotted the boat which was docked at the end of the ramp extending from the warehouse. It was a made-over job. The sides had been built up by planks so it could hold more cargo.

An outboard motor of about 70-horsepower was attached to the stern. From its outward appearance, the boat might have belonged to some fisherman who had converted it for limited deep-sea fishing. No one would suspect what it was actually being used for now.

Biff swam cautiously to the boat and rested, holding onto the shaft of the motor.

"Well, now!" he said to himself, grinning happily. He had noted that the motor was an old type model. This meant that the propeller was held in place by a lead pin. If the pin were sheared, the prop would not turn and the boat would be powerless. It would make a nice surprise for the smugglers, Biff decided.

He selected a stout piece of floating board about four feet long and jammed it firmly between two blades of the propeller and the bottom of the boat. Then he slipped off his belt and secured the board to the propeller shaft.

"There, that might work," he whispered to himself. "If the belt holds when the motor starts, the pin will break, and the prop won't turn."

He had sheared many pins in his little 5-horsepower boat when he had hit a hidden rock on the lake back home.

He swam ashore as fast as he could and crawled on the rocks where he would not be seen. He was desperate now. Time was getting short.

It was late in the afternoon. As soon as it got dark, the smugglers would be shipping out, and with Uncle Warren on board as shark bait. Biff walked on the rocks, hugging close to the foundation of the warehouse until he was clear of the building.

The big question now was where to go? What to

do? Biff's wet clothes felt cold and clammy, but he ignored the discomfort. He knew he was in the old part of the city of Mombasa, but would he know how to get back to it?

There were several cafés at the end of the street. One had a large sign, from which most of the paint had flaked off. It read "Mombasa Café." Here was a good landmark.

Biff's only hope was to get back to the police station somehow. The Inspector himself might still be on duty at this hour.

Biff walked for several minutes and finally came to what seemed to be a main street. He signaled several cars. Finally one stopped, and the driver asked what the trouble was.

"Please, sir," said Biff, "take me to the police station. It's a matter of life and death."

The driver was impressed by the sincerity and despair in Biff's voice.

"We go fast," he said. "Come on!"

In a short while, Biff was racing up the steps of police headquarters. He showed his Interpol ID card to the desk clerk.

"I've got to see the Inspector immediately," he said urgently.

"I take you to his office," said the clerk, impressed with the identification card. "Come."

Biff followed the man into another office. "Wait

here, please," the clerk said. "The Inspector will be back soon."

Nervously, Biff flopped in a chair, and the clerk left. When the boy heard someone approaching from another room, he sprang to his feet, ready to blurt out his story. Then his jaw dropped.

Monda had walked into the office from the other room.

CHAPTER XV

Monda Unmasked

WHEN Monda saw Biff, he rushed to him, grabbed his hand, and shook it vigorously.

"I'm glad to see you, Biff!" he exclaimed.

"I don't understand, Monda," said Biff, confused at this unexpected friendliness.

"I know. You thought I was part of the smuggling ring," Monda said.

"Well, aren't you, Monda?" Biff asked bluntly.

Monda reached into his pocket. "Look, Biff. Here's my card from Interpol in Tanganyika."

"Interpol!" gasped Biff, completely surprised. "You mean you're working for them, too?"

"That is so, Biff."

"Well, that's a surprise," said Biff. "Where is the Inspector?"

"He'll be back soon. I told him all about the safari. He said he must consult with someone but would come right back."

"I sure hope he gets here quickly. My uncle is in serious trouble," said Biff.

"We'll wait. Only a few minutes more, maybe."

Biff realized suddenly that Monda was speaking English fluently now.

Monda then told Biff about himself. He said that just when he was ready to enroll in the Royal Technical College in Nairobi, his father and mother had been killed in an accident. Left alone and penniless, he had managed to secure some odd jobs to keep himself going.

"Then one day," he explained, "a man from Interpol came to me and said I could help them catch people who steal valuable art treasures. They sneak them out of the country."

"You mean 'smuggle' them out?"

"Yes, that's what I mean," said Monda. "The man said because I'm young and know the Swahili language, maybe I could join a gang."

"How did they know about you, Monda?" asked Biff.

"I had been attending the Missionary School in Dar es Salaan. The principal had recommended me for the job."

Biff nodded. "Go on," he urged.

"Well, the agent said Interpol couldn't pay me much, but it would be enough to keep me alive. I didn't have a job, and I had had to give up the idea of going to college."

"So you decided to accept the offer," Biff prompted, anxious to hear the whole story, but trying to hurry its telling.

"Yes," said Monda. "The search led me across the border into Kenya, and then eventually into the area where the Mathews safari was moving."

"I see," encouraged Biff.

"I located the gang and asked for a job. I was ordered to find a way to join the safari. I was to report on the movements of everyone on the safari."

"Then you really didn't have amnesia?"

"Oh, no. That was the only way I could think of to be taken on without having to answer a lot of questions and make up a lot of lies. I had to go through with the orders so as not to arouse the suspicion of the man who had hired me."

"That probably explains a lot of things, Monda," Biff declared.

"I imagine it does, Biff. When we found the

jeweled statues *and* the ivory tusks in the shack, I knew it must be that the same ring was dealing in both items."

"I suppose, the night you left camp, you went to make a report?"

"Yes. I had been told that you and your uncle might be undercover men for the police. When I saw your uncle hide his rifle, I was pretty sure it was true. But I reported to the gang that I still wasn't sure," Monda said.

"Uncle Warren thought he had fooled everyone but me," said Biff. "Now just one more question, Monda, then we've got to move fast."

"OK, Biff, ask it."

"Why did you refuse to help me look for my uncle when we knew he had been taken away from the shack?"

"I didn't want to leave the shack. I knew the smugglers would return for the rest of the loot. Since I had been hired by one of them, I hoped that when they came they would take me along with them. Then I might be able to discover who the top men really were, and also find out where they had taken your uncle."

"Oh, I get it now," said Biff.

"When they did come, they took me to the cabin where you and your uncle were being held prisoners."

"Uncle Warren and I thought we recognized your voice," said Biff.

"I'm sure you did. But you were both asleep when I sneaked into the room and cut the rope on your hands."

"Oh, you did that!"

"Yes. And I was happy you got away. To make a long story short, Biff, the gang left me at the cabin. They said they would be back later. But I decided that now was the time to get here and ask the Inspector to help us."

"I know just where the whole gang is," said Biff. "Even the 'chief' is at the warehouse, whoever he is. They are holding my uncle. We've got to move fast."

Inspector MacMillan, who had entered the room quietly and listened to the story, spoke for the first time. "It must be near the Old Harbour," he said.

"I could see Fort Jesus from the window, Inspector," said Biff.

"That's the Old Harbour all right," said the Inspector. "What did you say about the chief?"

"Oh," said Biff, "they kept mentioning the 'chief.' I suppose he is the head man of the whole operation. Does anybody know who he is?"

"I have wired Interpol for some information," said Monda.

"We'll find out," said the Inspector. "Now we better move to the warehouse and try to save your

uncle. Maybe we can get the whole gang with the evidence."

"Thanks, Inspector," said Biff, "we can't lose any more time."

At that moment, the inter-com reported that a Mr. Erudu insisted on seeing the Inspector immediately.

"Erudu!" exclaimed Biff. "Why, that's the man who brought us the ID cards from Interpol."

Monda grabbed Biff's elbow and demanded:

"Is he a short, dark man with a couple of scars over his right eye?"

CHAPTER XVI

Prize Package

BIFF was startled by Monda's sudden question.

"Why, yes," he answered. "That just about describes him."

Inspector MacMillan barked out, "What are you getting at, young man?"

"I think I know this man, Inspector," exclaimed Monda. "Biff and I will hide and you talk to him, please. I have an idea, but I must be sure. He may be dangerous."

"All right," said the Inspector. "You two go in the other room. Let's see what he has to say."

In a few minutes, Biff and Monda were hiding in

the adjoining room, and Mr. Erudu was handing the Inspector his Interpol ID card.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Erudu?" The Inspector was playing his role perfectly.

Mr. Erudu told the Inspector that the Interpol office had received reports that some young American boy had been spreading fantastic tales about kidnapping and smuggling. He said the boy was full of wild imagination, no doubt stimulated by seeing too many American gangster movies.

Mr. Erudu suggested to the Inspector that if the boy should come to see him, he should humor him and then forget his wild tales.

"Are you sure his story is untrue, Mr. Erudu?" asked the Inspector.

"Absolutely nothing whatever to it," said Erudu. "As a member of the Interpol staff in Nairobi, I certainly would know if any illegal activities were going on in this area."

At this point, Biff and Monda walked into the room.

Erudu's jaw dropped. He jumped out of the chair and pointed a nervous finger at Monda and Biff. All he could say was, "You—you—"

"Inspector," said Monda calmly, "this man is the agent in charge of the smuggling operation in Southern Kenya."

Erudu reacted quickly. A revolver had appeared

like magic in his right hand. "Oh, no," he said hoarsely, "you're not bringing me in! Not one of you move!" he ordered.

Biff knew that Erudu could escape only by shooting the policeman at the desk in the outer room. But the man seemed desperate enough to do just that.

The Inspector warned Erudu that he could not hope to escape.

"Don't move," Erudu snarled. "You will never take me."

Biff's hand was resting on the desk close to a glass ashtray full of ashes and the Inspector's pipe. With a swift movement, Biff grasped the tray and pitched it into the panic-stricken man's face.

The gun wavered as Erudu's hand shot up instinctively to protect himself. In that instant, Monda and Biff dived at him. In a few seconds, Erudu was pinned to the floor. Two policemen rushed into the room when they heard the scuffle.

Monda quickly explained that Erudu was the man who had been giving orders to the smugglers in the cabin.

"I had been wondering how this man knew so much about the activities of Interpol," Monda said. "Then a few minutes ago, when Biff mentioned that Erudu was connected with the Interpol office in Nairobi, I realized that he must be on the inside of things."

"This explains why the smugglers have been able to get such a strong foothold in this area," the Inspector said.

"Then he's really the one they keep calling the chief?" asked Biff.

"I don't think so," said Monda. "Erudu is the middle man. He's in charge of this district for the international ring. The chief must be someone higher up who controls the whole operation internationally."

Biff interrupted, "Sir, what about my uncle? There isn't much time."

"Let's go!" ordered the Inspector.

In a few minutes, two police cars converged on the street where the Mombasa Café was located. The Inspector, Monda, Biff, and a number of policemen piled out of the cars, spread out, and started to move toward the warehouse at the end of the short block.

Suddenly a series of shots rang out from the building. The police deserted the street and took cover. Some of them ran behind the cars; some lunged into doorways.

Biff and Monda "hedgehopped" from doorway to doorway, working their way around to the rear of the warehouse. They hid behind some barrels which were standing on the side of the ramp leading down to the boat.

"Here come some of them," whispered Biff. "Maybe they'll bring Uncle Warren out now."

Four men rushed out of the large rear door of the warehouse carrying crates. They hurried down the ramp and hopped into the boat.

Then Biff's uncle, with his hands tied and a gag in his mouth, appeared. He was being shoved forward toward the boat by Carfu and Wallo.

Biff yelled, "Now, Monda!"

The two boys rushed out at the two men and began throwing punches. Carfu and Wallo let go of Uncle Warren, broke away, ran down the ramp, and jumped onto the boat.

Someone started the motor. Then there was heard a loud crunch.

"It worked!" yelled Biff.

The men in the boat raced the motor, but the propeller did not turn. The pin holding the prop had been sheared. The boat floated around helplessly. Some of the crew panicked and jumped overboard into the water.

The Inspector commandeered two small craft docked nearby. In a short time, the boat had been boarded, and those aboard were apprehended. The others were fished from the water.

"Well, here's the chief himself," said the Inspector, as he led a man back up the ramp.

"Mr. Henderson!" declared Biff.

"Well, I'll be darned!" said Uncle Warren.

All of the prisoners were ordered into the warehouse under police guard to await the police van which would transport them to the station.

Inspector MacMillan ordered Henderson to sit on a barrel, and started to question him immediately. Henderson was very evasive, but the Inspector was an experienced hand at breaking down the stories of criminals.

Henderson finally admitted that he had come to Kenya to inspect the smuggling operations. He had posed as an Englishman intent on enjoying some hunting and had joined the Mathews safari knowing it was going to travel through the area where the ring was operating. In this way he could hide his identity from the gang and also have a reason for being there.

"But when we came across all the evidence," Henderson said, "I tried to get Mathews to go in another direction, but he refused to do it."

Henderson said he suspected Biff and Becker were after something more than big game, but hadn't connected them with Interpol.

Then he turned toward Monda. "You had me fooled, young man," he said. "I soon suspected that you were probably working with the ring and had been placed with the safari as a plant."

"You guessed right up to a point," said Monda.

"I know that," said Henderson. "I tried to get you to talk when we were riding on the truck together, but you were a little too clever."

"Where does Erudu fit into this?" asked the Inspector.

"Since he was connected with the Interpol office, and had inside information on some of their plans, he managed to set up a good-sized organization in this area," Henderson explained. "I had to accept him in the organization but I never trusted him. I only sent him here to try to delay you. I hoped we could get the stuff loaded on the boat and make a clean get-away."

As the Inspector tried to pump more information out of Henderson, another police car drove up quickly. A policeman and another man, with a bandage on his head, climbed out.

"It's Mr. Mathews!" Biff exclaimed.

"What in the world happened to you?" Uncle Warren asked.

"Got conked on the head," the Hunter said, with a wry smile.

Mathews explained that he was chairman of a special committee of the East Africa Professional Hunters Association. The committee had been appointed to make their own investigation of the ivory smuggling

which was threatening to wipe out the entire elephant population.

"I knew we were getting close to the center of operations," said Mathews. "That's why I insisted on staying in the area."

"Did you suspect Henderson, Mr. Mathews?" asked Biff.

"Not at first, but I began to when he kept insisting we change our direction," said Mathews.

"We suspected you, Mathews," said Uncle Warren. "Especially when you accepted the story of those two fellows who said that Frank G. Selby was their guide."

"I knew the men were lying, but I didn't want them to suspect that I was trying to get evidence," Mathews explained.

"What did you think about Monda here?" asked Biff.

"I wasn't so sure about him." Mathews shook his head, then grinned at Monda. "I didn't swallow your amnesia story. It was too pat, and sometimes your English was too good. I thought I'd just watch you, until you showed your hand one way or the other."

"Well," said Uncle Warren, "to get back to my original question. What happened to your head, Mathews?"

"Well, after Biff left for Mombasa, I returned to the camp. I found that Henderson had paid most of

native crew and sent them away. He kept a couple with him. One of them conked me on the head, tied up my hands and feet and left me."

"How did you get away?" asked Biff.

"One of the native boys who had been with us on the safari suspected something was wrong. He came back to camp later and released me. After I got my head bandaged up, at the hospital, I rushed over to police headquarters, but the Inspector had already left with Biff and Monda."

At this point, the Inspector interrupted. He was holding a telegram which had been given him by the policeman who had just arrived with Mathews.

"You'll be interested in this, gentlemen." He handed the message to Monda. "It's your reply from Interpol."

"Good," said Monda. "It's from the Secretary General himself, Monsieur Picot." Then he read the wire aloud.

"Mathews, no record. Henderson, alias Gabriel Harden, one of top most-wanted international criminals. Big operator. Has eluded law for years. Three nations offer reward for his capture!"

"Wow! A reward!" exclaimed Biff.

Three days later, Biff was at the airport ready to take off for the United States. He shook hands with

Mathews and Monda and exchanged an affectionate farewell hug with his uncle.

"Hey, Uncle Warren," Biff said, "you're crushing my souvenir of Africa."

"Souvenir?"

"Why, sure," said Biff. He reached in the breast pocket of his jacket, pulled out an envelope, and withdrew its contents.

"See?" he said. "I received a letter of thanks from Interpol and a check for my share of the reward, \$2000."

"Not a bad souvenir, Biff," said Uncle Warren. "Not bad at all."

"What are you going to do with your reward money, Biff?" asked Monda.

"This will help pay my way through the University of Notre Dame," said Biff proudly. "And what are you going to do with your share, Monda?"

The native boy pulled the check out of his pocket and waved it. He had a big grin on his face.

"First, I'm going to buy some American clothes," he said.

"And then?" asked Biff.

"Then, my friend," said Monda, "I'm going to enroll at the Royal Technical College in Nairobi."

Biff's last glimpse of Africa was from the window of a plane 5000 feet up in the air. As the plane dipped to make a turn he saw three tiny figures on the ground

at the airport. They were still waving good-by. Biff lifted his hand and waved back although he knew they could not see him.

Then Biff turned to the stranger who was sitting next to him. "Well, I'm sure of one thing," he said, grinning.

The man looked at him and smiled. "And what might that be?" he asked.

Biff leaned back in his seat. "You can find wonderful people no matter where you go."





ANDY ADAMS

African
Ivory
Mystery

GROSSET & DUNLAP